

S T O R Y A N D T R A D I T I O N

IN THE NARRATIVE OF

2 SAMUEL 2-4, 9-20 AND 1 KINGS 1-2

by

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PREFACE

I wish to thank Professor Lloyd Geering who first stimulated my interest in the "Succession Narrative" when I was his student at Knox College, the University of Otago, New Zealand; my colleague at the University of Sheffield, David Clines, who has provided me with countless invaluable debates on matters of central importance to my subject; and Professor Max Wilcox, my supervisor, whose encouragement launched me on this project at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne, and whose advice and criticisms I have greatly valued.

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The first section (A) of Chapter IV has appeared in VT 24 (1974) 286-317 as "Narrative Patterns and Oral Tradition in Judges and Samuel"; Appendix C has appeared in JBL 93 (1974) 513-8 as "The 'Battle Report': Oral or Scribal Convention?"; Chapter III is forthcoming in Semeia³ (1975) as "David and the Gift of the Kingdom (2 Sam 2-4, 9-20, 1 Kgs 1-2)".

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REFERENCE AND NOTES

Reference to the Old Testament is to the text of R. Kittel's Biblia Hebraica (7th edn., Stuttgart 1951).

Reference to other literature is by citation of author's name or, where necessary, author's name and year of publication. The Bibliography, which is listed in alphabetical order by author's name, provides details of all works thus cited. Standard abbreviations of journals, series, etc., are used (see, for example, those listed in Eissfeldt, 1965:854-61).

Notes are marked in the text with a number, on the line, set off by slashes, thus: /1/. The notes themselves are printed at the end of the volume.

CHAPTER I

THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF THE NARRATIVE

1. The literary quality of the "Succession Narrative" has been the subject of almost universal agreement amongst critics. It is a fine piece of story-telling (von Rad, 1966 : 189-91; Pfeiffer, 1952: 356; Eissfeldt, 1965 : 50, 276; Fohrer, 1970 : 222). Curiously, however, in extended discussions of the nature and purpose of the narrative this observation has tended to play a relatively small role. That is not to say that such discussions devote little space to the analysis of the narrative as a skillfully constructed story. The contrary is perhaps true (see, e.g., Rost; von Rad, 1966; Whybray, 1968). But rarely has a direct link been drawn between its literary qualities as a story and its purpose; rather the tendency has been to infer purpose from an analysis of the actual subject matter (e.g. the claim that it tells a story about the succession to the throne of David, or simply that it recounts events in the life of David), or of some ideological traits discovered in the author's manner of presenting this subject matter (e.g., his bias for or against the Davidic dynasty, or the nature of his understanding of God's action in history, or his attitude to the cult).

1.1 Thus in recent years the most notable characterizations of the narrative have been in terms of historical writing (von Rad, 1966), theological writing (von Rad, 1966; Brueggemann), political propaganda (Rost; Whybray, 1968; Delekat) and didactic literature (Whybray, 1968; Hermisson), or some combination of these. My purpose here is to bring the focus back upon the narrative as story-telling, as a work of art and entertainment.

A. Historiography, theology, a novel, political propaganda and didactic writing

2. The most thorough-going discussion of the character and purpose of the "Succession Narrative" in recent years is that of Whybray (1968) and it is with his argument that I am chiefly concerned here.

2.1 For a start, I agree substantially with his criticisms (11-19) of the view that the narrative is primarily history writing and with his conclusion (19) that "The Succession Narrative, although its theme is an historical one and it makes use of historical facts, is not a work of history either in intention or in fact. The author's interests lay elsewhere". I adopt this as a working hypothesis and do not propose to discuss it further in any detail /1/.

2.2 Furthermore, like him (49-50), I cannot accept that the narrative is basically shaped in terms of a religious purpose. This is not to deny that there is a theological dimension to the narrative; but I would argue that reference to Yahweh is so fragmentary and the nature of his involvement in the action so barely sketched that to designate the work as essentially theological in purpose or interest is to lose all sense of proportion /2/. Critics such as Meyer were not so far from the truth when they wrote of the narrative as "secular" in character (285-6; cited by von Rad, 1966 : 197 and Whybray, 1968 : 50 n.55; cf. Pfeiffer, 1951:5).

2.3 Much of Whybray's chapter on "character and purpose" is an examination of the narrative as a novel (19-47); he analyses the work in terms of categories such as theme, structure, use of dialogue, characterization and style. Indeed he arrives at the conclusion (47), "that the work is a novel - albeit a historical one - rather than a work of history properly speaking". Again with the large part of his discussion I would agree; though whether the term "novel" is quite the best one is a matter to which I shall return at the end of this chapter.

2.4 Having reached this conclusion, however, the argument takes a new turn (the emphasis is mine):

But ... we are still some way from a full understanding of [the narrative's] character and purpose. No doubt purely literary and artistic aims and the desire to entertain the reader occupied an important place in the author's mind. But it is extremely unlikely that these were his only, or even his main, aims. He would not have chosen so recent a period of history as the setting for his story if he had not some other, more practical, purpose. We are therefore driven to an examination of other possibilities.

What has intervened at this point is a conviction that the work comes from a period nearly contemporary with the events portrayed. This leads Whybray to develop Rost's widely accepted view that the real concern of

the narrative is with dynastic politics (the theme is Solomonic succession) and that the document was written to the greater glory of Solomon. Whybray concludes (54-5) that the narrative was written during the early years of Solomon's reign, soon after the events described in 1 Kgs 2, and while the regime was still threatened by disaffected parties: it is primarily a political document intended to support the regime by demonstrating its legitimacy and justifying its policies (so also Vriezen, 1948).

2.5 In the remainder of his book (chapters 3 and 4) Whybray argues that the author was strongly influenced by "wisdom" literature and that the narrative has thus a marked didactic as well as political character. Here too the assumption of a Solomonic date plays an important role: as Brueggemann has noted (1972a : 5), the argument starts from, and develops, von Rad's thesis of a Solomonic "enlightenment" (1966 : 203-4; 1962 : 48-55; cf. Whybray, 1968 : 1-7, 56) and in broad outline resembles that critic's analysis (1953) of the Joseph story as a product of tenth century "wisdom" writing.

B. The date of composition and the interpretation of the narrative

3. This assumption of the contemporary, or near-contemporary, provenance of the work is almost universally accepted (cf. Whybray, 1968 : 11) /3/. It has been of some importance, moreover, for the understanding of the narrative, as the case just mentioned well illustrates. From the assumption about date stems some degree of confidence about our knowledge of the narrative's general cultural context and of the relation between the two. In fact almost every recent study of note has linked an analysis of the narrative with a cultural or political description of the tenth century and the Solomonic period in particular (see e.g. von Rad, 1966 : 192-4, 203-4; Brueggemann, 1968; 1971; 1972 abc; 1974). But what if the narrative were not written in Solomon's lifetime? What if it were written in the time of say, Jehoshaphat or Uzziah or Hezekiah, or even during the exile? Clearly Whybray, for one, would have to modify considerably, if not abandon, his argument that the narrative is political propaganda.

3.1 The fact of the matter is, as Eissfeldt recognized (1965 : 140-1), that there is not a shred of hard evidence to support this assumption of near-contemporary authorship. /4/. Perhaps the most

commonly deployed argument is that which refers to the wealth of circumstantial detail, as though this, in the absence of external controls, somehow demonstrated a near-contemporary, or even "eye-witness", author. So, for example, Beyer (30) writes: "All this [sc. the story] is told by a man who had been present in all these situations, with all the variety of graphic and intimate details that bears the stamp of veracity on its face" (cf., e.g., Driver, 1913a : 183; Weiser, 1961 : 165) /5/. To the reader of, say, the Iliad, the Chanson de Roland, Njáls saga, or a modern historical novel, the worthlessness of this argument will be immediately apparent /6/.

3.2... Whybray's own ascription of the work to the early years of Solomon's reign has cogency only on the prior assumption of Solomonic provenance, and this is a matter to which he devotes little more than a sentence in a footnote (54 n. 70). He follows Rost (233) in claiming that the author reveals no knowledge of the disruption of the kingdom; thus it is argued, the work must be dated to the life-time of Solomon (so too, e.g., Gray, 1970 : 18). But even if it were true that no such knowledge is revealed (and I doubt this very much, though it is too complex an issue to be dealt with here /7/) it is far from self-evident why this should be expected in a story that is not about the division of the kingdom and is set in time well before this event.

3.3 An underlying reason why a Solomonic date has so readily been assumed by some recent writers (esp. von Rad, Whybray, and Brueggemann) is that it fits with their conception of the tenth century as a period of blossoming intellectual and literary life as well as an era of great economic and political expansion. Alongside major developments in wisdom literature, the work of the Yahwist and the "Succession Narrative" have been important planks in this hypothesis (Alt, 1951; von Rad, 1962 : 48-55; Richter, 1966b; Ruppert, 1967; Wolff, 1966; Scott, 1970 : 33-6; Brueggemann, 1968; 1971; 1972c : esp. Chapt. 3).

3.31 But whether or not the period was actually one congenial to literary activity (it may well have been); the evidence for locating particular literary compositions in it is fragile, where existent. (a) The dating of "J" to the tenth century rests on no more solid ground than does the similar dating of the "Succession Narrative". There is nothing in the document, whatever its extent (and this is itself a question fraught with problems /8/) that demands a terminus ad quem in the Solomonic period (Fohrer, 1970 : 151-2; Eissfeldt, 1965 : 194; Wagner, esp. 122, 125-30).

The move from the standard ninth century date, itself based on little enough evidence, must be seen as essentially a matter of convenience in the interests of an hypothesis and not as a matter of evidence. (b) Few scholars would wish to assign any particular and substantial piece of extant "wisdom" literature to the Solomonic period - an acknowledgement that there were other periods when literary activity flourished. (c) A serious consideration of such other periods is noticeably neglected by those who have most confidently pressed the hypothesis (as von Rad, Brueggemann).

3.4 This brings one back to my original question: what if the "Succession Narrative" were written at some other time, possibly several centuries after the event? If there is no internal or external evidence requiring a Solomonic date for the narrative, neither, I would argue, is there any inherent improbability in almost any date from then to the exile. The only substantial objection I can see arising is the claim that the later the date the greater the influence of an idealised "Davidic" theology (cf. e.g. Kittel, 47; Rost, 232-3; Mauchline, 240)/9/ and the less likelihood of the rather down-to-earth presentation of the king that we actually find in the "Succession Narrative". But this is to assume a monolithic view of Israelite literature. It is perfectly reasonable to postulate a multiplicity of traditions and ideologies existing side by side, perhaps sometimes in competition, over a long period of time; and in this connection it is vitally important that we keep the Old Testament in a proper perspective here - we have, of course, absolutely no means of knowing how representative it is of Israel's literary (and ideological) history.

3.5 Now it is not my purpose here to press a case for any particular date or historical context for the narrative. I doubt that that could be done with the prospect of inspiring any more conviction than does the uncritical acceptance of near-contemporary authorship. Rather I wish to stress how hypothetical is the nexus between the text and the generally accepted setting. And because it is hypothetical, the more the historical perspective becomes an integral part of our understanding of the text the greater the chance that that understanding may be grossly distorted /10/. Cut the nexus, and perhaps the narrative may appear in tones that are not only different but possibly in some cases more

faithful to the text itself. This, I am sure, is the case where the "political propaganda" characterization is concerned.

3.6 As already indicated, the Solomonic date plays a key role in Whybray's analysis (and this is true also of von Rad), magnifying the significance of the political subject matter. If the story touches directly on the accession of the reigning monarch (and the intrigue that led to this) how could it be other than embroiled, to some extent at any rate, in contemporary politics? Accordingly, Rost and Whybray look for a manifesto and locate it basically in the outcome, Solomon is the winner; the story is told, therefore, in justification of his succession /11/.

3.7 Now it so happens that about the same time as Whybray's book appeared, Delekat published an article which challenged head-on this longstanding claim that the narrative is written from a view-point favourable to David and the Davidic house. Again he assumes (27) without question that the work appeared during Solomon's life-time and again he is much concerned to relate text and (reconstructed) historical setting, the latter having no little bearing on his exegesis of the former. Starting from the Bathsheba episode, undoubtedly the most unfavourable account of David in the whole of the Old Testament, let alone the "Succession Narrative", he argues with considerable skill that an anti-Davidic and anti-Solomonic polemic informs the whole piece. Thus the logic of the "political propaganda" characterization ensures that the swing of the pendulum is total. If the document is not pro the royal house, it must be anti; if the tone is not white, it is black.

3.8 It is clear, on the one hand, that no exegesis can afford to ignore Delekat's emphasis /12/. His general perspective is pertinent and many of his particular observations illuminating. Yet I remain unconvinced that he has accurately put his finger on the tone of the narrative. Have a host of critics been totally wrong in detecting an underlying sympathy for David, despite his undoubted short-comings (e.g. Wellhausen, 1885 : 262; Kittel, 175-6; von Rad, 1966 : 195; Hertzberg, 341, 378; McKane, 1963 : 276; Auzou, 42-3, 408; Mauchline, 240)? I doubt it, and shall develop the point in Chapter III, below.

3.81 But whatever the precise attitude of the narrator towards the dynasty what is absolutely clear from this timely clash of judgements is that if there is a particular political tendenz in the narrative it is by no means obvious what it is /14/. And while this is no knock-down

evidence against the propaganda characterization /15/ it certainly calls it radically into question. Thus Hermisson (148 n.16) simply comments that it is "eine These, die angesichts der distanzierten Haltung des Verfassers so kaum zu halten sein wird." Indeed this takes us back to a characteristic of the writing which has been much observed, particularly in connection with discussions of it as "history writing", viz. the so-called "objectivity" of the author (Montgomery and Gehman, 69-70; Weiser, 1957 : 164-5; Caird, 866). /16/

3.9 I would argue, therefore, that the rubric "political propaganda" has little to commend it as a definition of the character or purpose of the narrative, and even less if it is conceived of as political propaganda in justification of Solomon's succession. /17/ And I would suggest that the argument only gets going because of an assumption about, and pre-occupation with, a contemporary or near-contemporary date.

3.91 This is not to say that I deny any political interest in the narrative. Far from it. But we are talking about the primary nature and purpose of the work. Shakespeare's "historical" plays are clearly "political" in terms of subject matter and themes explored, and few in an Elizabethan audience could have failed to appreciate the undercurrent of comment on contemporary political life and institutions; yet they are above all plays, works of art for the purpose of serious entertainment, and least of all are they "propaganda". The colours of political propaganda are strident. The colours of this literature much too subtle. The same, I would argue, is true of the "Succession Narrative" /18/.

C. Whybray : the narrative as didactic writing (wisdom literature) and political literature

4. Significantly, Whybray himself senses the incongruity between the characterization "political propaganda" and his own keen appreciation of the literary qualities of the narrative. Despite his conclusion (55) that the work is "primarily a political document" he finds it necessary to begin the next chapter with the statement (56) that this description, though accounting for "much of the content" of this narrative, "is hardly sufficient to account for its literary character or its psychological interests."

4.1 But again the question of date interposes (56): for in order to account for the literary character "we must return to a more detailed consideration of the milieu in which the author lived". By way of the hypothesis of a specially trained "cultural elite" surrounding David and Solomon (McKane, 1965 : 23-47; Scott, 1971 : 13-15) /19/ we are rapidly brought to the Book of Proverbs, "our main source of information about this educational and scribal ideal".

4.11 There follows a comparison of the "Succession Narrative" and Proverbs which leads to the claim that "on many fundamental matters ... the Succession Narrative agrees closely with the scribal wisdom literature as represented by Proverbs rather than with the sacral tradition of Israel as reflected in - for example - the other Davidic stories in the Book of Samuel". This conclusion encourages the writer to press his case further, which he does, first, by examining more correspondences between the "Succession Narrative" and Israelite "didactic literature" (the author "was himself a wisdom teacher in the sense that he set out deliberately to illustrate specific proverbial teaching for the benefit of the pupils and ex-pupils of the schools"; 95), and, second, by a comparison with Egyptian political (and wisdom) literature.

4.12 This hypothesis, which has gained some measure of acceptance (cf. Scott, 1970 : 34-5; Mauchline, 240-1; Gray, 1970 : 21-2; Brueggemann, 1972a : 5-6; 1974 : 175), has been vigorously attacked by Crenshaw (137-40), and in my view Crenshaw's fundamental argument, that the book fails to specify stylistic peculiarities, themes or elements of subject matter, and ideological traits, that are found primarily in wisdom literature, is fair and devastating /20/. Like Crenshaw, then, I am totally unconvinced by this part of the book (i.e. the "Succession Narrative" as Egyptian influenced didactic literature). Nor, to the best of my knowledge, has his attack been the subject of a carefully considered rebuttal - for it is not enough simply to shrug it off as do, for example, Brueggemann (1972b : 97 n.4; 1974 : 175 n.1) and Hermisson (148 n.16). Nevertheless, at the risk of repeating points made by Crenshaw, I wish to explore the matter a little further.

The narrative and Proverbs

4.2 Crenshaw has commented upon some of the problems of definition raised by this and other studies of "wisdom literature", though it is not obvious that his own proffered definition, "the quest for self-understanding

in terms of relationships with things, people, and the Creator" (see esp. 130-2), in any way settles the matter /21/. For present purposes it is sufficient to make the following observation.

First, in view of the breadth and generality of most working definitions of "wisdom" in connection with Old Testament literature, /22/ I do not think it unfair to suggest that at the most what is being defined is an "approach to reality" (von Rad) or "world view" (Brueggemann) that is non-priestly or cult-centred, perhaps, in some cases, non-prophetic, and perhaps even non-theocentric (Brueggemann) - which is not to say in any strict sense "secular". Obviously, then, "wisdom's representatives and answers" (Crenshaw, 131) must be manifold; so that to identify a piece of literature as reflecting "wisdom" influence is to tell us virtually nothing about its purpose or milieu (including period), except that it probably does not belong in a priestly or prophetic setting, which is likely to have been obvious anyway.

In fact, however, in the main section of his book Whybray makes it clear that he is talking of "wisdom literature" as didactic literature /23/, (i.e., meant to instruct, having the manner of a teacher); the author of the "Succession Narrative" was himself a teacher or educator, and the work is deliberately designed as teaching material (72, 95, 111). My criticisms, therefore, are directed against the characterization of the "Succession Narrative" as wisdom literature in this particular sense.

4.21 Most of the correspondences between the narrative and Proverbs are merely generally stated themes which might belong to almost any piece of literature giving an account of men's lives in almost any period of Israel's history. There is barely a theme listed by Whybray (or Hermisson, for that matter) which cannot be "illustrated" by material from, say, the patriarchal narratives or those stories in Samuel which Whybray considers not to belong to the "Succession Narrative". In Appendix A, below, I give a long list of examples /24/.

4.22 Moreover, some of Whybray's conclusions rather obscure the real nature and extent of the evidence that he has previously examined. Let me take the crucially important conclusions on p.71.

4.221 (1) He concludes that there is a "stress" in both Proverbs and the "Succession Narrative" on "the importance of ethical conduct,

humility and private prayer." But whether or not this is an accurate description of Proverbs, where is this stress in the "Succession Narrative"? All Whybray has in fact shown (57-71) is that certain situations arise in the narrative that raise for the reader serious problems of moral evaluation (quite a different thing from the ranks of pre-packaged ethical platitudes that confront the reader at every turn in Proverbs), that humility is an emotional ingredient in the story, and that there is one occasion when a character offers a private prayer.

4.222 (2) It is concluded that in both blocks of material there is "importance" attached to "human wisdom and counsel both in public and in private affairs". This looks impressive until we turn back to the argument (57-60) and find that the selection of evidence is virtually indiscriminate.

Most of the material cited from the "Succession Narrative" is subsumed under the following claim (58):

Every incident illustrates either the application of wisdom and/or counsel to a particular situation, or the consequences of not applying it; the folly of acting without it.

Examples are then given of acting without wisdom - David's adultery, Amnon's rape of Tamar, and Adonijah's request for Abishag. But this has become virtually meaningless as a specific characteristic,, for it is clear from the examples given that any action whatsoever that a reader judges to have been "not wise" may come under the heading, since the element of actually taking counsel is optional. By the same token one could say, for example, that Abram's action in trying to pass off Sarah as his sister (Gen. 12) was an extreme case of acting without wisdom (though ironically /25/, he thought he was being clever) which would have ended in disaster had not Yahweh providentially (another so-called "wisdom" theme) stepped in, as he did in the matter of Achitophel's counsel, and made life difficult for Pharaoh /26/. But does this really make the story in Gen. 12 an example of "wisdom" literature?

Having cited these cases of acting "without wisdom", Whybray continues:

But in almost every other incident in the book the characters act only after they have calculated their chances of success and the probable consequences.

Examples given are as follows: David's killing of Uriah; Amnon receiving counsel to rape Tamar (but the consequences were not properly calculated); Joab's use of the woman of Tekoa (an example of Joab's wisdom); Absalom's skill in stealing the hearts of the men of

Israel; David's action in sending back to Jerusalem Hushai and the priests; Joab's rebuke to David after the death of Absalom. This time the criterion looks more specific. In fact it conceals possibly even greater breadth than the previous one, as may be illustrated by the first case listed, viz. David's killing of Uriah. From this example we see that for an action to come under this general head it is not necessary for the calculation of the chances of success and the probable consequences to be actually expressed in the text. We need only guess that there was some such calculation. Moreover, a glance at the actual consequences of the actions exemplified makes it clear that these may fall within the range success to failure (judged by whatever standard the reader cares to nominate). In this case, therefore, almost any action taken by a character in any situation would qualify for inclusion.

4.223 (3) It is concluded that
on many fundamental matters ... the Succession Narrative agrees closely with the scribal wisdom literature as represented by Proverbs rather than with the sacral tradition of Israel as reflected in - for example - the other Davidic stories in the Books of Samuel.

The fundamental matters (two of which I have already discussed above, para. 4.221, 4.222; in addition, "the unseen, all-embracing purpose of God and of his retributive justice" and "the relatively small attention paid to the cult") are all clearly non-"sacral" emphases. Now the claimed correspondences between Proverbs and the "Succession Narrative" only really gain force in the argument by this contrast with other material. The term "sacral" used to describe all other "tradition" loads the comparison. Obviously, neither of these two works is "sacral" (of or for sacred rites); yet there is any amount of tradition in Genesis and 1 Samuel, for example, which might have been used by way of comparison and which is equally non-sacral in character. In fact the only comparison with any material that has been made in the section to which these concluding remarks belong has concerned not "many fundamental matters" but merely one of the four main points, viz. the attitude of the author towards the cult. Specifically (pp. 66-71), the "Succession Narrative" and Proverbs are singled out from "the other stories about David" by virtue of the relative attention paid to two aspects of cultic life, viz. the ark and the oracle - both of which are, of course, mentioned (albeit briefly) in the "Succession Narrative" /27/, and neither of which plays

any part at all in the bulk of the "other stories" (e.g., David and Goliath 1 Sam. 17; David and Michal, 1 Sam 18-19; David and Jonathan, 1 Sam 20; David sparing the life of Saul, 1 Sam 24 and 26; David and Abigail, 1 Sam 20; David and Achish, 1 Sam 27 and 29). As a basis for any serious comparison between Proverbs and the "Succession Narrative" on the one hand, and "other" literature on the other, this is insecure, to say the least.

4.224 (4) The suggestion (72-6) that there might be some parallels of function between the characters and situations of the "Succession Narrative" and the "dramatization of gnomic teaching" found in Proverbs (e.g., Prov 20:13, 20:4, 19:24 etc.; the description of the good wife, 31:10-31, or the "strange woman", 2:16-19, 5:3-8, 6:24-5, 32, 7:5, 25-27; the contrasting pictures of the woman of life and that of death, 1:20-33, Chapt. 8; the autobiographical recitation, 4:3-5; or the examples given by the teacher of his observations of others, 24:30-36, 7:6-23) is hardly compelling. Formally speaking, none of this material in Proverbs is remotely like the "Succession Narrative" (cf e.g., length, plot, named characters and dialogue). But the most pertinent difference is simply that the "dramatizations" of Proverbs all draw a clear moral. In most cases the teacher makes the lesson absolutely explicit (e.g., "And now, O sons, listen to me ... let not your heart turn aside to her ways..."; 7:24-5). This is obviously didactic literature. Nothing could be less like the "Succession Narrative". If there is one thing the author of that work never does it is explicitly to draw a moral (see further below, Chapt. III).

The narrative and Egyptian political literature

4.3 A similar problem to that last mentioned besets the comparison with Egyptian literature which occupies Whybray's final chapter.

4.31 A characteristic political genre is the Königsnovelle (Hermann; Herrmann), which, however, is totally unlike the "Succession Narrative" in that it is essentially an elaborated and crude form of royal flattery. Hence Whybray himself concludes that the "Succession Narrative" "is obviously not itself a royal novel in the Egyptian sense: it corresponds with it neither in form nor in contents, and it is much longer" /28/.

4.32 But when we are directed towards literature that has a little more in common - he instances in particular the Story of Sinuhe - we find ourselves back where we started: for there is no more evidence that

this story is in any important sense either didactic or political literature (or both) than there is in the case of the "Succession Narrative". While Whybray (104) is well able to characterize it as having "great entertainment value" the evidence that it is wisdom (didactic) literature appears to consist largely of the fact that it is about a courtier and depicts, inter alia, a king who is "fearsome, yet capable of great beneficence," courtly caution before this king, the "themes" of "wealth, filial piety ... old age and a good burial", and a central character who is "a mixture of wisdom and folly" (but is this not an oversimplification of the character?) and who suffers changes in fortune. It is simply not clear why this should be held to constitute the marks of didactic literature. /29/.

4.33 Even weaker is the evidence adduced to show that it is in any significant sense a work of political propaganda - this consists of nothing more than the fact that the story presents Sesostris, the Pharaoh, in a favourable light /30/.

4.34 Finally, we come to a comparison with The Instruction of Amenemhet. Yet once again, as soon as we move back to literature that is more obviously didactic and political we move away from the "Succession Narrative": Whybray (111) admits that "Amenemhet seems to be in every way a totally different kind of work from the Succession Narrative: it is short, it is autobiographical, it is not a novel, it makes no psychological study of character, it does not express wisdom teaching through narrative, but simply sets the two genres side by side". What then have the two works in common? Virtually nothing, unless one is already convinced of the preceding thesis about the "Succession Narrative". Thus it is claimed that the author is, like the author of the "Succession Narrative", "a man who combined the roles of educator, administrator and political propagandist"; the historical situations in which the two books were written (i.e., early in the reign of the second king of a new dynasty) were identical; each has a political aim and is in one sense or another a "political testament" justifying the old regime and the claim of the successor; the portrayal of Amenemhet is very "human"; there is wisdom instruction in Amenemhet; there is a hint that some conspirators against Amenemhet belonged to the king's most intimate circle.

4.35 Accordingly, in my view, none of these comparisons with Egyptian literature add anything whatsoever to the case for describing

the "Succession Narrative" as either didactic literature or political propaganda. On the contrary, the closest parallel is to be found in a literary piece, the Story of Sinuhe, which may best be described as a work of entertainment (Peet, 40-1; Harris, 232; Whybray, 104).

Conclusion

4.4 To conclude, it is my contention that no convincing case has been made out which would warrant characterizing the "Succession Narrative" as didactic literature. The stance of the author is not that of a teacher. If the impact of his work upon us has an aspect that might be termed "educational" this is only so in the sense that the reading and appreciation of any literary work of art which is one of "high seriousness" (Arnold) may be termed an "educational" experience. Nor do Whybray's comparisons with Egyptian literature in any way advance his argument whether it be concerned with the narrative as didactic literature or political propaganda or a combination of both.

D. The narrative as "story" ("saga")

5 I have rejected as inadequate descriptive categories historiography, theological writing, political propaganda and didactic literature. What then is my own suggestion?

5.1 Take away the argument concerning political propaganda and the bulk of Whybray's discussion of character and purpose in Chapter II remains an eloquent plea for classifying this narrative as a novel. I am constrained to ask, therefore, why not let this, or some similar characterization stand? Why should not "literary and artistic aims and the desire to entertain the reader" (47) occupy not merely "an important place in the author's mind," but the important place? In other words, why not accept the narrative as first and foremost a fine piece of story-telling and not as essentially something else?

5.11 The suggestion is neither original nor radical /31/; it merely constitutes a plea to critics to take seriously as the essence of the composition the one aspect of the work that has been the subject of the most widespread agreement, viz. its quality as a story.

5.2 Whether the term novel, or even novelle, is precisely right for this kind of literary creation is a difficult question.

We may certainly recognize in the work most of the ingredients of the novel that Whybray (19) lists: thematic and structural unity /32/ (but I differ on the details; see below, chapters II and III); convincing and lively dialogue; credible characters, corresponding in their complexity to the experienced realities of human nature; and a lively and flexible style capable of conveying to the reader mood, feelings, atmosphere, irony and humour. Yet the term "novel" implies certain circumstances of composition that I am less sure about. It implies an essentially literary as opposed to oral genre, and a high degree of autonomy of the author over his style and subject matter. Thus Whybray (19), like von Rad (1966) sets the narrative over against the "earlier sagas" and the "Yahwistic history" and speaks of it by contrast as a "free composition."

H.M. and N.K. Chadwick, on the other hand, with a vast array of comparative literature to provide some control, find no such obvious discontinuity with the earlier parts of the story of David and suggest (II/636) that the term "saga" would be appropriate for a work of this style and subject matter (see also Schulz, 1923 : 17; Schulte, 175-6) /33/ :

... it is worth noting that the narrative bears a rather close resemblance to the 'Sagas of the Icelanders' and to some stories in the (Icelandic) 'Sagas of Kings' These sagas show the same verisimilitude and liveliness, together with fullness of detail, and in general, though they contain a large imaginative element, they may be regarded as historical authorities /34/

The difference between "novel" and "saga" lies essentially in the traditional character of the latter: "The word 'saga' ... should apply to the Icelandic family sagas and other realistic, novel-length, traditional prose narratives like them. The key word is 'traditional', for otherwise the sagas might be indistinguishable from novels" (Scholes and Kellogg, 50) /35/.

5.3 Since I am persuaded (below Chapter IV) that there are clues in the "Succession Narrative" which point to it being rather less of a "free" composition ("the earliest work of its kind in Israelite literature" - Whybray, 1968 : 19) and more of a traditional composition than Whybray allows, I should prefer the term "saga" to "novel". Thus I align myself with the Chadwicks and with the view that sees the possibility of the work as narrative composition which is shaped by "long established conventions developed in oral tradition" (Porter, 22) /36/ and by "techniques [which are] present and discernible

in the final stages of legend composition". (Jackson, 195; cf. 183-5) /37/. The "Succession Narrative" stands squarely in a tradition of Hebrew story telling that we see elsewhere in narratives from Genesis to Kings /38/.

5.4 Nevertheless, at the risk of using a term that is much too broad, I shall prefer to refer to the narrative simply as a "story", a piece of narrative or a tale of any length told or written in prose or verse of actual or fictitious events /39/. This has the one great advantage of not prejudicing the question of the precise circumstances of its composition, which is the aspect of the work about which we know least, while conveying, I think, its essential literary character /40/.

E. Thesis.

6. My thesis, then, is that the "Succession Narrative" is a story (saga) which cannot in any primary sense be termed historiography, political propaganda (tendenz literature) or didactic (Wisdom) literature; rather it is best appreciated as a story, told for its own sake - told, that is, because like the best of mankind's literary artistry it constitutes serious entertainment. It is a story, moreover, that in terms of both craft and materials stands in a story-telling tradition that is represented elsewhere in the prose narratives of Genesis to Kings.

6.1 In Chapter II I examine the question of the precise boundaries of the narrative; in the process I re-open the question of the centrality and significance of the "succession" theme. In Chapter III I offer an interpretation of the narrative with particular reference to its thematic structure and to the narrator's perspective; this essay assumes the "story" character of the narrative and in itself tests the argument already advanced that the narrative is neither didactic nor propagandistic in tone or intention. In the remaining chapter I discuss some evidence that may contribute to our understanding of the narrative as one which belongs to a (possibly oral) story-telling tradition.

CHAPTER II

THE BOUNDARIES OF THE NARRATIVE

1. It has long been accepted that the narrative contained in 2 Sam 9-20 + 1 Kgs 1-2 is largely a coherent unit from the pen of a single author (Wellhausen, 1878 : 224-6; Driver, 1913a : 182-3; Eissfeldt, 1965 : 276; Fohrer, 1970 : 222) /1/. Arguments concerning style, outlook (world-view) and theme, story-line (plot) or interlocking subject matter, have all played a part in producing this consensus. But while there is general agreement that 1 Kgs 2 marks the end of the narrative (Schulte, 169) /2/ there exists considerable uncertainty about the point where the document begins (Wellhausen, 1878 : 230; 1885 : 262; Eissfeldt, 1965 : 137; Thornton, 189-190; Whybray, 1968 : 8; Auzou, 364; Schulte, 138-9).

My purpose in the following chapter is to argue that the bulk of 2 Sam 2-4 should also be included in the narrative, as has been recently argued by Schulte (138-80) and Segal (1964-5 : 323-4) /3/, though whether chapter 2 itself provides a certain beginning I must leave still an open question.

A. The beginning of the story : 2 Sam 2-4

2. 2 Sam 9 is widely adopted, at least for practical purposes, as a starting point for the narrative as a whole (e.g. Bentzen, I/244; Bright, 453-4; de Vaux, 11-2; Whybray, 1968 : 8; Fohrer, 1970 : 222; Mauchline, 240-1; Brueggemann, 1972a : 3-4). Apart from similarities of style it is closely linked with 2 Sam 15-20 by the Mephibosheth sub-plot (Carlson, 131; Segal, 1964-5 : 319). On the other hand, the previous chapter, 8, with its mechanical, annalistic rehearsal of David's victories and its lack, for example, of dialogue or focus upon character, has no significant connection whatsoever with what follows /4/. Yet, as I have already indicated, it is hard to find a scholar who is prepared to defend chapter 9 as a certain (or even satisfactory) beginning to the story that follows: it starts abruptly and with a question that seems to imply some previously narrated event. Its adoption as a beginning is largely the result of failure to find a consensus on an alternative. It is, so to speak, a lowest common denominator.

2.1 Rost, in his influential study of the narrative, could only suggest (212-6) on this point; and then almost solely on "thematic" grounds (on which see further below, para 7. - 7.41), that the Michal episode in 2 Sam 6:20 - 23, and perhaps an original dynastic oracle in 2 Sam 7 (vss. 11b, 16), preceded 2 Sam 9 and had been woven into the ark narrative (6 : 1-19, following 1 Sam 4-6) /5/. But he admitted that this material was fragmentary, and he was certainly unwilling to press the chapter 7 connection (see esp. 215), which is hardly surprising since it is quite the weakest part of his argument /6/.

2.11 The thematic connection that is claimed between these verses in chapter 7 (whose separation within the chapter is itself highly debatable) /7/ and the "Succession Narrative" proper is that the promise of a Davidic dynasty is then followed by the vicissitudes of David's actual reign: the tension is resolved by Solomon's enthronement and "the problem of the succession to the throne [is] solved" (von Rad, 1966 : 202; cf. Rost, 213-4).

This is to confuse two related yet distinct themes which may be expressed in the questions (a) "Will David be succeeded on the throne by any of his own sons?" (the dynastic theme), and (b) "which of David's sons will succeed him?" (the succession theme proper). The question "Who shall sit on the throne of David?" (1 Kgs 1:13) which Rost employs to state his theme of "succession" is clearly equivalent in 1 Kgs 1 to "which of David's sons shall succeed him?" And inasmuch as a "succession" theme is present in 2 Sam 9-20 it must also be stated thus, at least in the bulk of the narrative (that concerning Adonijah and Absalom): it cannot be stressed too much that there is never any real question in this material that the throne will go to someone other than a Davidide, the only possible exceptions being the distinctly minor characters, Mephibosheth and Sheba.

Accordingly, the promise in chapter 7 which ensures David of dynastic succession is simply irrelevant as a source of dramatic tension to the following stories about David and his sons. Rost's attempt to single out a verse and a half and join it to a large connected narrative beginning some chapters later, on the ground of a thematic link as fragile as this one, must be rejected as totally unsatisfactory.

2.111 Recently Ridout (see esp. his chapt. V) has re-opened the question of chapter 7 and pressed for the inclusion of the whole of the chapter (with the exception of vss. 12b-13a and possible also vs. 16) as the introduction to the narrative. But while many of his observations

are valuable for the study of the redactional compilation of 2 Samuel, I find it impossible to accept that these chapters originally had any intimate connection with each other, if for no other reason than that they are fundamentally different in character and in the stance of the author: the one (chapter 7) is ideologically obvious, platitudinous and boring; the other (2 Sam 9-20 etc.) a subtle and compelling story of deep human interest (Jackson, 185-6) /8/.

2.12 To come back to Rost's other suggestion, concerning chapter 6 and the ark story: it must be replied that it is in no way clear why the author should have wanted to begin his own story with the ark narrative in particular, a story that has nothing to do with the "succession" theme, has no obvious link with the content of 2 Sam 9-20 and 1 Kgs 1-2, apart from the mention of the ark in 15:24-9, and, as Rost himself urges (e.g. 218-24), is of a markedly different literary style and general outlook. The suggestion, therefore, does little if anything to resolve the problem of a beginning to the narrative. If the Michal story in chapter 6 originally belonged to the "Succession Narrative" and not to the ark story it is highly unlikely that its present location was the work of the author of the "Succession Narrative" (Mowinckel, 10). This leaves us with the fragment of a story (Michal in chapter 6) which again, like 2 Sam 7, has on the "succession" argument no primary thematic connection with the bulk of 2 Sam 9-20 and 1 Kgs 1-2 /9/.

2.2 If chapters 8, 7 and 6 offer no satisfactory solution to the problem of a beginning for the story, no more does chapter 5. Again like chapter 8 (though it has not quite the same secular, annalistic flavour) and unlike the "Succession Narrative" it is essentially a disjointed compilation of separate incidents or notices, sparsely narrated and with little interest in, or observation of, the participants as people. Also unlike the "Succession Narrative" there is no development of plot or tension, dialogue is desultory, and the rather simple minded religious focus of the Philistine anecdotes (consulting the oracle and receiving a direct reply; the idols of the Philistines; expressions such as "David did as Yahweh commanded him") has no parallel in the other material.

2.3 With chapters 2-4, on the other hand, the picture is quite different. Here we have, at least from 2:8 or 12, what is generally recognized as a long coherent and flowing story of how David came to be in a position to receive the crown of Israel, with only a few passages (e.g. 3:2-5) that might be considered extraneous

(Wellhausen, 1878 : 222; Driver, 1913a; 182; H. Smith, 267-8; Budde, 1902 : 207-8; Nowack, XIX-XX; Gressmann, 126-33; Hölscher, 374; Carlson, 41, 49-51; Ward, 140-1; Schulte, 140-2, 165-6; contra, Cook, 147-50; Rost, 238). Moreover, it appears to have many of the literary qualities of 2 Sam 9-20 and 1 Kgs 1-2: it is relatively extensive and elaborated, its primary focus is upon the characters involved and their inter-relations (Luther, 194-5), and it makes superb use of direct speech /10/. I suggest, therefore, that there is a prima facie case for considering this material further.

B. Narrative thread

3. One possible line of enquiry explored by Rost (192-3) starts from a consideration of 2 Sam 9:1 - "And David said, 'Is there still anyone left of the house of Saul that I may deal loyally with him for Jonathan's sake?'" Does this presuppose the story of the Gibeonites' revenge, now in 2 Sam 21?

A common answer to this question is that this or some other version of this story is presupposed (so, e.g., de Vaux, 178; Hertzberg, 299, 381). Some scholars would further claim that at one stage in the history of the book 21 : 1-14 actually preceded chapter 9 (so, e.g., Budde, 1902 : 244, 304-6; Schulz, 1923 : 6; Caird, 859, 1092; Carlson, 198 - 203; Auzou, 364) /11/. On the other hand, few have been prepared to argue that this episode formed an original part of the "Succession Narrative" itself /12/. It appears to differ in its religious outlook and, as it stands, is clearly linked through the plague motif with the story of David's census, which only takes us away from chapter 9 and the following episodes rather than forming a connection with it. Such was Rost's conclusion and this is my own view (so also Whybray, 1968 : 8; see further Wellhausen, 1878 : 224, 228-9; Ridout, 41 n.1, 163 n.1) /13/.

3.1 A much simpler solution is to link 9:1 with the end of chapter 4 and hence with the large narrative of chapters 2-4. What 9:1 basically requires as an antecedent is an account of the death of any surviving Saulides of public or political standing (i.e., whom, in terms of the narrative, David would be expected to know about; cf Kennedy, 234). The narrative of chapters 2-4 appears to take it for granted that Ishbosheth is in fact the last such Saulide /14/. With the story of Ishbosheth's death, therefore, we have precisely the situation presupposed by 9:1 (Segal, 1918-9; 54-5; cf Nibel, 72) /15/.

3.11 One advantage of this hypothesis is that it accounts simply and naturally for 4:4 being where it is /16/. The author is anxious to foreshadow the forthcoming episode (chapter 9); at the same time it enables him to fill in some of the background of the new character (Mephibosheth), thus removing some constraints on his construction of the scene in chapter 9.

3.12 The other obvious link of plot between chapters 2-4 and 9-20 + 1 Kgs 1-2 comes in 1 Kgs 2 in the account of Joab's death (Segal, 1964-5 : 324; Schulte, 142). In David's instructions to Solomon (2:5-9) and in the ensuing account of Solomon's implementation of the instructions (2:28-46) every character and every incident mentioned is found in the body of the "Succession Narrative" as it is commonly demarcated, except the killing of Abner (2:5,32) /17/. This, therefore, must count as a particularly strong piece of evidence in favour of the inclusion of 2 Sam 2-4 within the boundaries of the narrative.

3.13 The mention of Abner raises a further point. With 2 Sam 2-4 the reader of Samuel must notice at least one significant change in the subject matter, a change which concerns the characters in the stories. Previously, the focus has been directly upon David and Saul; now although the action has a profound bearing on David, and in that sense he remains the true focal point, he actually stands on the circumference of much of the action. On the other hand, Joab and Abner, men who have played only minor roles in the stories in 1 Samuel, become leading figures. The whole circle of people involved in the narrative also broadens (Schulte, 140-8). This state of affairs is precisely parallel to what we find in 2 Sam 9-20, the respective roles of David and Joab, in particular, being strikingly similar.

3.14 If, then, we add 2 Sam 2-4 to the rest of the narrative the resultant story is a coherent one of how David gained the throne of all Israel, of how he then nearly lost it, and of how he finally relinquished it: it is a story of accession, rebellion and succession /18/. This coherence will be more fully explored in Chapter III, below.

3.2 On the negative side I see only two serious objections to the suggested link. In chapter 4 David is based in Hebron, while in chapter 9, if vs. 13 is not a gloss (as suggested by H. Smith, 311-2; Pfeiffer, 1937: 315; Hertzberg, 301; Flanagan, 1971 : 49; cf. Titkin, 50), he is apparently living in Jerusalem, and this is certainly the case from chapter 11 onwards /19/. Furthermore, from chapter 10

onwards it gradually emerges that David is now king of "all Israel" and not just Judah as is the case in chapters 2-4. These difficulties, however, are not insuperable as I shall now attempt to show.

3.3 2 Sam 9-20 + 1 Kgs 1-2 itself falls into quite distinct blocks of material (e.g., chapters 11-2, 13-4, 15-20, 1 Kgs 1-2) and at least in the case of 1 Kgs 1-2 there appears to be a radical break in time between this and the preceding narrative. Moreover, it cannot be said that the narrator has taken much trouble to bridge the gap (compare the careful statements of the lapse of time in 2 Sam 13-20, viz. 13:23, 38, 14:28, 15:7 (reading 'rb' (sn(y)m) with LXX); so also Whybray, 1968 : 30) /20/.

3.31 Nor is the setting of the action in 2 Sam 9 or 10-12 in the least important for the story, and only after the account of Absalom's rebellion is well under way does it play a role of any significance in the narrative. All we might expect, therefore, is the briefest indication of the change of scene. This raises various possibilities.

3.311 (1) We know that the whole complex in which the story is now embedded (1 and 2 Samuel) has undergone a redactional process: it is quite possible, therefore, that the inclusion in the complex of the story of the taking of Jerusalem (5:6-9) has led to the omission from the "Succession Narrative" of a brief clause, now redundant, to the same effect /21/.

3.312 (2) It is noticeable that until the last verse of chapter 9, the story of Mephibosheth's reception makes no mention of a particular city; the reiterated phrase is simply "you shall eat at my table always", not as we might perhaps have expected if the scene were set in Jerusalem, "you shall eat at my table in Jerusalem always." It is only with vs. 13, which together with vs. 12 has sometimes been seen, on other grounds, as a gloss (noted above, para. 3.2), that we are told "and Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem." The option is open to accept vs. 13 as a gloss, and to connect chapter 9 initially (primarily?) with chapters 2-4 rather than 10ff., assuming its precise setting (which, I stress again, is of no significance to the story: the point is that Mephibosheth was where David was) to be still Hebron. Thus the next major episode, the account of David's adultery and the murder of Uriah, begins (10:1) with a formule (wyhy 'hry kn) which marks a major division, just as it does later at the beginning of the next major episode, in 13:1.

Following Rost's analysis (184-91) of chapter 10 I would then suggest omitting vss. 6b-19 as not originally from the "Succession Narrative" (so also Flanagan, 1971 : 50; cf; 1972 : 175-6), but unlike him, I would

find the continuation of 10:6a in 11:1ff, instead of 11:2ff./22/. The verse is closely linked, ironically (Ridout, 152-3), with what follows and it provides, as Ridout (65) observes, "the datum which makes possible David's cohabitation with the wife of Uriah" (see also Budde, 1902 : 250; cf. Carlson, 146-8). Setting the scene for the main episode, therefore /23/, is a brief prelude (the quarrel with the Ammonites) which ends (11:1) with just the kind of simple indication that the setting is now Jerusalem that we were looking for: "And David was dwelling in Jerusalem" (wḏwḏ ywšb byrwšlm : normally taken as "But David remained in Jerusalem" (cf. RSV): on my interpretation the clause obviously serves a double function).

3.4 Finally, the change in David's status that we find in chapter 13 onwards (i.e. that he is now king of all Israel) need be no problem. It may simply be a matter of cultural background: we may quite reasonably assume that by doing no more than indicate that the scene had in fact changed, that David was now dwelling in Jerusalem, the author could be sure that his audience or readers would be in possession of the wider significance of that move. Nevertheless, this is not the only way in which this particular objection may be met. The question of David as king of all Israel prompts a closer look at the precise boundaries of the story in chapters 2-4.

C. The precise boundaries of the David/Ishbosheth story

The Ending

4. Does the episode relating to the death of Ishbosheth end, not with the burial (4:12) but with an account of the crowning of David as king over all Israel as Schulte suggests (165-6; cf, e.g., H.Smith, 286; Nowack, XX; Gressmann, 131-3)? He takes the passage 5:1-3 as a conflation of two sources (so, e.g. H.Smith, 286; Kittel, 46; Budde, 1902 : 218; Mauchline, 215; Flanagan, 1971 : 47), one of which he sees as the concluding account of the Ishbosheth story, the other as the continuation of a David History running through 1 Samuel and found also in 2 Sam 1 (1b-4, 11-12 + ? 19-27) and 2:1-7 (see 105-180) /24/.

4.1 Whatever the precise merits or otherwise of Schulte's analysis it does demonstrate that the story of David, Abner and Ishbosheth in chapters 2-4 can be removed from its immediate context (with which it is only loosely associated) and linked with the major episodes in the succeeding

chapters, without disturbing any of the main threads of the preceding narratives /25/. That is to say, while to link chapters 2-4 with 9-20 cuts across many conventional analyses of this part of 2 Samuel, it does so in a way that allows relatively simple modification of most of these /26/.

4.2 The status of Schulte's particular argument concerning 5:1-3 is more difficult to assess (the details are on pp. 165-6).

Whereas most commentators who have seen a doublet here have simply divided vss. 1-2 from vs.3, Schulte takes vss. 1,2a and 3b ("and they anointed David king over all Israel") as the continuation of the David/Saul history (i.e. it links with 2 Sam 2:1-7), 3a as the conclusion to the story in chapters 3-4 (cf. the "elders of Israel" in 3:17 and the "covenant making" in 3:21), and vs. 2b as a Deuteronomistic gloss (cf. 1 Sam 25:30).

Against this I would argue, first, that the passage is one of those where undoubted repetition cannot with complete confidence be cited as evidence for source division, since the repetition may equally well be understood as a deliberate rhetorical device (Carlson, 55); second, that in particular, Schulte's analysis (a) requires the arbitrary discarding of the phrase, gm ʔtmwl gm šlšwm, in vs. 2a, as a gloss from 3:17, and (b) fails to observe that the speech in vss. 1b-2 has more connection with 3:17-8 than this phrase alone.

4.3 This latter point (b) is of some significance for any hypothesis concerning the composition of 2 Samuel and therefore warrants some attention.

4.31 The speech in question (5:1b-2) has a certain structural parallel with 3:17-8:

(1) In times past (gm ʔtmwl gm šlšwm): occurs only here and in the parallel passage, 1 Chron 11:2)

{ (i) you have been seeking David as king
(ii) you (David) were in effect king ("it was you who led out and brought in Israel")

(2) Yahweh said to { David:
 { you (David) :

{ (i) by the hand (yd) of my servant David, I will save my people Israel, from the hand of the Philistines, and from the hand of all their enemies.
(ii) you shall shepherd my people Israel, and you shall be prince (ngyd) over Israel.

4.32 The close affinity of these two speeches is further underscored when their relationship to several other passages in Samuel is seen.

2 Sam 19:10-3 :

And all the people were at strife throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying:

"The king delivered us from the hand (kp) of our enemies,

and saved us from the hand (kp) of the Philistines;

but now he has fled out of the land from Absalom.

And Absalom, whom we anointed over us is dead in battle ..."

+ vss. 12-3:

And king David sent this message to Zadok and Abiathar the priests:

"Say to the elders of Judah ...

You are my kinsmen, you are my bone and flesh ..."

(c sm + b sr : in Samuel only here and 5:1 /27/)

1 Sam 9:16 (Yahweh to Samuel, concerning Saul) .:

"... and you shall anoint him to be prince (ngyd) over my people Israel,

And he shall save my people from the hand (yd) of the Philistines ... "

+ 10:1 (LXX : see Driver, 1913b : 77-8; H. Smith, 69; Hertzberg, 77)

(Samuel to Saul) :

"Has not the Lord anointed you to be prince (ngyd) over his people Israel?

And you shall reign over the people of the Lord,

and you will save them from the hand (yd ?) of their enemies round about ... "

2 Sam 19:10 ff. is linked with both 3:17-8 (David will save the people from the hand (but note kp, not yd, in 19:10) of the Philistines/enemies; and there is consultation with the "elders") and 5:1-3 ("all the tribes of Israel"; "your bone and flesh"; "anoint" as king); and all three passages find at least partial parallels in 1 Sam 9:16 + 10:1.

4.33 It would seem to me, therefore, that this rather complex inter-relationship of the passages must make any attempt to describe a redactional history here hazardous in the extreme.

4.34 Nevertheless, there are several points which may be borne in mind if an attempt is made to explore the relationship.

(1) In contrast to the other passages, 2 Sam 19:10ff. contains no hint of Yahweh's presence or motivating power behind the king's deliverance (in 2 Sam 19:10 the people say, "the king delivered us ..."; 2 Sam 3:18: "Yahweh said to David, 'By the hand of my servant David, I will save my people..."; 2 Sam 5:2 "and Yahweh said to you, 'You shall shepherd my people... '").

(2) 2 Sam 19:10 has kp for "hand" and not yd as in 2 Sam 3:18, 1 Sam 9:16 and 10:1 (probably).

(3) The line about deliverance in 19:10 has a different balance from that in 3:17 and strikingly so from those in 1 Sam 9:16 and 10:1, which have no poetic structure at all.

(4) In 19:10ff. David's claim to a "bone and flesh" relationship with Judah (and Amasa) seems clearly to be in contradiction^{stin} to any relationship he has with Israel; yet in 5:1 it is the northern tribes who make this claim.

(5) 3:17-19 sits a little awkwardly in its present context and makes Abner's conversations with David in vss. 20-1 seem out of place (H, Smith, 278; Nowack, XXXIII; Flanagan, 1971 : 46). Moreover, the information in 4:1 that when Ishbosheth heard the news of Abner's death his courage failed and all Israel was dismayed hardly seems to suggest that Israel was eagerly seeking to switch allegiance to David.

(6) It has been argued by some that the passages in 1 Sam 9 and 10 come from a redactional stage in the formation of the material of these chapters (see Miller, 1974, and literature cited there).

4.4 All these observations prompt the following tentative suggestions.

(1) Schulte's division of 5:1-3 is unsatisfactory in the light of 3:17-9, let alone the other parallels.

(2) 3:17-9 may not originally have belonged in its present context; on the other hand it seems closely connected with 5:1-3. There is some ground, therefore, for suggesting that neither passage may originally have belonged to the main narrative of chapters 2-4.

(3) Furthermore, given several significant points of distinction between these passages (and those in 1 Sam 9 and 10) on the one hand and 2 Sam 19:10 ff. on the other, it is conceivable that the composition of 3:17-9 and 5:1-3, especially the latter (with "all the tribes of Israel", "bone and flesh") has been partially influenced by the account of negotiations

between David and the people in 19:10ff., (where the "bone and flesh" motif appears to be more securely anchored in the story).

(4) If the passages in 1 Sam 9 and 10 are indeed the result of a redactional overlay, it is possible in view of the affinities between these passages and 3:17-9 + 5:1-3 (but note the more prosaic structure of the passages in 1 Samuel) that the same redactor is at work, his object being perhaps to show the central role of Yahweh in the designation (and in Saul's case, rejection) of the king.

4.5 There is some ground, therefore, for linking 3:17-9 and 5:1-3 with 2:1-7 (+ 3:1-6?) and for taking this material as either the continuation of an original source narrating David's rise to power to be found also in 1 Samuel and perhaps in 2 Sam 1 /28/, or for seeing it as a redactional overlay tying the particular story of David and Ishbosheth into a broad history of Saul and David that is presented with a certain theological tendenz.

4.51 On the other hand, it must be clear that the foregoing argument is far from definitive and can be advanced on a tentative basis only. Moreover it seems to me that the judgement that locates the ending of the episode in the coronation segment is substantially correct: the story from the first struggle between Ishbosheth's and David's men onwards is wholly directed towards, and has its point in, Ishbosheth's downfall and David's gain of his throne.

This leaves three possibilities: (a) Schulte is right after all; (b) Schulte is right to locate the ending in 5:1-3 but his analysis is wrong and the conventional one should be followed; (c) the passage as it stands is redactional, as I have suggested, but it replaces, or is a careful reshaping of, the wording of an original ending. In the light of the foregoing discussion this last naturally commends itself to me.

4.6 There remains, however, a further complication for this assessment of 3:17-9 and 5:1-3. This concerns the possibility of a link between 5:1-3 and the Michal story in chapter 6.

4.61 It has for some time been customary for scholars, though by no means all, to distinguish, as Rost did, between two separate traditions in chapter 6, viz the story of the ark and that of Michal's childlessness (Rost, 150, 212-5; von Rad, 1966 : 176-7; Hertzberg, 277; Maier, 61; Flanagan, 1971 : 48). The Michal story is usually traced in vs. 16 and 20b-23; but if we are to work on the basis of this

hypothesis of two integrated traditions a more refined analysis may be made as follows.

4.62 Vs. 20a certainly belongs to the ark narrative, providing a neat inclusio. The episode opens with the blessing of Obed-Edom and his household, and ends with the blessing of David's household. Vs 16b ("and she saw King David leaping and dancing before Yahweh") requires vs: 14 ("and David danced before Yahweh with all his might") and this in turn appears to demand vs. 5 ("And David and all the house of Israel were making merry before Yahweh with all their might with songs [rdg. bkl 'z (w) bšyrym ; cf. vs. 14 and 1 Chron 13:8 and see Driver, 1913b : 266; Titkin, 46] and lyres and harps ..."). The exclusion of these verses (5 and 14a) leaves the thread of the ark narrative undisturbed. On the other hand we now have a separate and coherent story of David and all Israel making merry "before Yahweh", of David in particular dancing and leaping "before Yahweh" with all his might, of Michal despising him (for "showing off" (glh); not necessarily "uncovering himself" literally) /29/, and of David insisting that it was done in honour of Yahweh ("and I will make merry before Yahweh").

4.63 In this material about Michal the only clue to the story's original context is to be found in vs. 16a ("And the ark of Yahweh came into the city of David" /30/), a clause that could well be either redactional /31/, linking the two narratives, or belong to the ark narrative itself. If so, the only remaining connection between the two blocks of material is that each entails a situation of rejoicing "before Yahweh". We may fairly consider, therefore, whether the present contextualization of the Michal story is not an artificial one.

4.64 This brings us back to 5:1-3, the coronation of David at Hebron, "before Yahweh" (vs. 3). Here too we expect a scene of rejoicing just as we find if we turn back to the story of Saul's coronation in 1 Sam 11:15 /32/:

So all the people went to Gilgal, and there they made Saul king before Yahweh in Gilgal. There they sacrificed peace offerings before Yahweh, and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.

Moreover, in David's speech to Michal (vs. 21: "It was before Yahweh, who chose me above your father, and above all his house, to appoint me as prince (ngyd) over Israel, the people of Yahweh") we find direct echoes of the language of the promise in 5:2.

4.65 My suggestion, therefore, is that the Michal story of chapter 6 may originally have belonged after 5:1-3, but has been re-located in the ark story as part of a process of focussing the whole complex of material in 2 Sam 1-8 upon chapters 6 and 7 (see McCarthy, on chapter 7): David's greatest moment of rejoicing is to be found in his bringing of Yahweh's ark to the great cult centre, Jerusalem, an act which leads in turn to Yahweh's promise of dynastic security.

4.7 The complication for the analysis of the David/Ishbosheth story in chapters 2-4 and the relationship of these chapters to 5:1-3 lies in the fact that if the Michal story of chapter 6 really belongs with 5:1-3, as I have indicated may be the case, then it certainly seems to pre-suppose knowledge of some such story as 3:12-6 (i.e. the bringing of Michal to David). It thereby must count as evidence for the inclusion of 5:1-3 (or something very like it), and thence 3:17-9, in the main narrative about David and Ishbosheth /33/.

4.71 Again, however, it is as well to be cautious about any conclusions. The relationship between the Michal material in chapters 3 and 6 may be accounted for in other ways. For example, the apparent dependence of the one episode (chapter 6) upon the other (chapter 3) may be explained, just as I suggested might be the case with 5:1-3 in relation to 19:10ff. (above, para 4.4), if the chapter 6 material were seen as secondary to that in chapter 3, representing a stage of redaction when the main narrative of chapters 2-4 was subjected to expansion and integration into a larger complex. Such an hypothesis would fit with that of Schmidt (58-102) concerning the place of the Samuel oracles in the story of Saul's rise to kingship in 1 Samuel 9 and 10 (followed by Miller, 157-8; see also Schulte, 108-9; Carlson, 52-5). Yet it must also be said that any such hypothesis involves a large measure of speculation. Perhaps the most that can be said with any certainty about the redactional history of all this material is that it is probably complex and it has led to some degree of interweaving of component sections.

4.8 In the face of these uncertainties and complications, therefore, my inclination is to accept an original connection between 5:1-3 and the preceding narrative without being prepared to specify precisely what form that connection took, and to allow (without wishing to press the issue) that the coronation scene itself may possibly have concluded with the incident involving Michal which is now woven into chapter 6.

The beginning

5. I now pose the question whether the story that begins in 2:8 or 12 (Schulte, 165) may with any certainty be accounted the beginning of the whole narrative with which we are concerned.. While I believe (with Schulte) that it constitutes a far more satisfactory beginning than does chapter 9, let alone the Michal story in chapter 6 (Rost), it remains possible that it was itself preceded by earlier episodes in the present books of Samuel.

5.1 The immediately preceding segment recounting the coronation at Hebron is uncharacteristically (i.e. for the "Succession Narrative") sparse - unless it presupposes a more broadly spun tale of the events leading up to it, as, for example, the story of David, Saul and the Philistines in 1 Samuel - and the oracular consultation (2:1) is atypical of the "Succession Narrative" (including now 2:8 - 4:12 or 5:3) but typical of some narratives in 1 Samuel (e.g. chapters 22, 23 and 30). In addition 2:4-7 presupposes 1 Sam 31:8-13 and seems thus to be firmly linked to the Saul narratives of 1 Samuel, whereas the story leading up to the coronation of David as king of Israel appears to make a fresh beginning.

5.2 On the other hand, Carlson (51) rightly notices "a striking correspondence between [the] account of the murder of Ishbosheth and that in chapter 1 of David's treatment of the killer of Saul. The agreement is further accentuated by the fact that both murders are carried out by foreigners, an Amalekite and two Beerothites respectively." Furthermore, similarities of style, language and compositional skill might suggest a reconsideration of chapters such as 1 Sam 25 (David and Abigail), 20 (David and Jonathan and the arrows) and perhaps to a lesser extent 24 and 26 (Saul at the mercy of David) /34/.

5.3 With this material, however, we again come face to face with major questions about the composition of 1 Samuel and these are questions which I do not propose to enter into here /35/. Rather my purpose in the present chapter is simply to re-open the question of the boundaries of the "Succession Narrative" and to make a specific, if limited, suggestion, viz. that the bulk of the story in 2 Sam 2-4 (+ 5:1-3) should be considered as belonging to the narrative, providing in fact the direct (or almost so) antecedent to chapter 9, and furnishing, I would argue, a much more satisfactory beginning to the narrative than either chapter 9 or chapter 6.

I now propose to provide some further backing for this suggestion through an examination, first, of the style of these chapters (2-4) and second, of their thematic relationship to 2 Sam 9-20 + 1 Kgs 1-2.

D. Style

6. A major aspect of Rost's definition of the "Succession Narrative" was his argument for the stylistic unity and distinctiveness of these chapters in relation to other material in Samuel (see esp. 218-26; cf Whybray, 1968 : 45-7). In the main I thoroughly agree with his designation of stylistic characteristics and his delineation of significant differences in the material he dealt with (mostly the ark narrative in 1 Sam 4-6, and 2 Sam 6, 7 and 8), but when one examines closely his treatment of the chapters in 2 Samuel prior to chapter 6 it is fairly clear from its brevity that he had already decided the question of scope on the basis of the "succession" leitmotif which had led him to chapter 6.

6.1 While he goes to considerable length to illustrate the undoubted stylistic differences between the "Succession Narrative" and the ark narratives his comparison with the material in the earlier chapters of 2 Samuel is cursory (Blenkinsopp, 1966 : 46) and is confined to a comparison with what he deems, with no supporting argument, to belong to an early source giving an account of David's reign, viz. 1 Sam 23:1-13, 27:1 - 28:2, 29:1 - 30:26, 2 Sam 1:1, 2:4a, 3:20-9, 3:31-7, 4:1a, 5-12, 5:3, 17-25 (+ chapter 8?).

This idiosyncratic analysis is far from self-evident (see the studies cited above, n.26; also the charts in Löhr, XXXIV - LXVIII, and Nowack, XXX - XXXIV), and in my view, as will be apparent from my observations above, lumps together material that is as different as chalk and cheese. For example, on the one hand we have the narrative which concerns us here, the skillfully developed story of 2 Sam 2-4 (from which Rost arbitrarily selects bits and pieces), and the sparsely narrated notices of the fighting with the Philistines in 2 Sam 5 : 17-25 (and similarly with the capture of Jerusalem, 5 : 5-9) /36/ which are best compared with the stories in 21 : 15 ff. and 23 : 8 ff. (and cf. chapter 8 and 10 : 15-19) which Rost takes for granted, rightly in my view, as not belonging to the "Succession Narrative". Given the presence of this latter type of narrative in his source one is hardly surprised to find him concluding (e.g. 239) that the source lacks the breadth of style so characteristic of the "Succession Narrative" proper.

6.11 In effect, then, it is fair to say that Rost's study of the "Succession Narrative" lacks any proper comparison with the extended narrative of chapters 2-4. In the present section I shall examine

this material and show that it is stylistically homogeneous with chapters 9-20 + 1 Kgs 1-2 /37/.

Inclusio

6.2 In his characterization of the style of the "Succession Narrative" Rost (221) particularly singles out the abundance of what he terms Ploke (ring composition or inclusio; see also Schulte, 139, 31 n.61; and esp. Ridout, 36-47, and cf. 47-74) and notes the relative frequency of similes, rare in the Hebrew prose of the Old Testament.

6.21 In chapters 2-4 we come across both simile (cf Schulte, 142, arguing the same case) and inclusio with the Abner story barely begun.

The simile : Asahel was as swift of foot as the wild gazelle (2:18).

The inclusio (there are two together in fact):

- | | | |
|------|---|---|
| 1. | { | And there <u>went out</u> |
| vv. | | Abner the son of Ner and the servants of Ishbosheth the |
| 12-3 | | son of Saul, from Mahanaim to Gibeon: |
| | { | And Joab the son ^{of} Zeruiah and the servants of David |
| | | <u>went out.</u> |
| 2. | { | And they met /38/ at the pool of Gibeon <u>together</u> (<u>yhdw</u>) |
| vv. | | ... (details of contest) |
| 13-6 | | And they fell <u>together</u> (<u>yhdw</u>) /39/. |

6.22 While 2:18 is, as it happens, the only simile in chapters 2-4, the use of inclusio in these three chapters is striking, particularly in the speeches. Rost and Ridout between them list sixteen examples in the whole of 2 Sam 9-20 + 1 Kgs 1-2 (though there are more examples than they cite). That it is possible to find at least ten cases of this stylistic device in the story of David, Abner and Ishbosheth suggests that in this respect the two blocks of narrative are highly comparable. As with the cases cited by Rost and Ridout those in chapters 2-4 vary from the quite simple and rather mechanical to the highly subtle; sometimes only a few clauses separate the ring elements, sometimes a number of verses. Further details are given below in Appendix B /40/.

Other forms of repetition

6.3 Ridout's analysis (Chapters II and III) makes clear that several other forms of repetition play an important role in the "Succession Narrative" author's technique of composition /41/: (1) the repetition of

words, phrases, or even sentences or groups of sentences as key motifs or for emphasis (see also Whybray, 1968:26); (2) chiasmus; (3) repetition as a means of linking successive episodes, by significant phrases (etc.) appearing at identical places in each segment. Again parallels abound in chapters 2-4.

6.31 (1) Ridout's analysis (97-102) of the function of bśr (9 times) and rws (12 times; observed also by Rost, 226) in the messenger episode of 2 Sam 18:19-31, or of ʔh (11 times) and ʔhwt (8 times) in the Tamar story in 2 Sam 13:1-22, can be matched, for example, in the story of pursuit (going "after" someone) in 2 Sam 3:19-30 by the persistent and subtle, and in the death scene in vs. 23 ironic, variations on ʔhr (14 times): e.g., rđp ʔhry; nth/swr mʔhry; bʔhry hñnyt ("with the butt of his spear" - see Driver, 1913b: 243; cf. Titkin, 41); mʔhryw ("from his back"); and even bʔhrwnh ("in the end").

Also noticeable in this story is the way in which the death scene moves rhythmically to a climax through the reiteration of the phrase "turn aside", expressed in a variety of ways /42/, roughly speaking diminishing in length as the climax is approached, so that what starts (vs. 19) as "and as he went he turned (nth) neither to the right hand nor to the left from following Abner" ends (vs. 23) incisively as "but he refused to turn aside (swr)" /43/. The insistence on the phrase serves not only to control the rhythm and pace of the narrative, it is also obviously hermeneutically significant; it draws attention to the fact that Asahel quite deliberately took on Abner, so that even if there is an element of deception in Abner's move of killing him (see below, chapt. IV, para 7.1), it is made crystal clear to the reader that Abner was pressed into taking this action. We are immediately reminded of the similar technique in the Uriah story (with the key phrase "to go down to his house", in 2 Sam 11:6-13) or in the story in 2 Sam 9 of Mephibosheth's reception at court (cf. "to deal loyally with" and "to eat bread at the king's table always") both discussed by Ridout (102-7 and 109, 117-8; cf. Rost, 226).

6.311 Nor is this the only case of key word repetition in 2 Sam 2-4. Another excellent example occurs in the account of Abner's death ("and he sent him off and he went in peace") in 3:20-7 which is linked with the repetition of šlh throughout the whole episode. Notice also the ironic play on "know/not know" (four times) in vss. 25-6.

6.32 (2) One of several examples of chiasmus in chapters 2-4 (see

further, Appendix B), is the speech of David to Abner (3:13) /44/ :

"Good, I will make a covenant with you; but one thing I require of you, namely:

- a You shall not see my face
- b unless you bring (bw)
- c Michal the daughter of Saul /45/
- b' when you come (bw)
- a' to see my face.

6.33 (3) Ridout (74-87) discusses several cases where repetitions appear at identical places in succeeding narrative units and serve to relate the episodes together as part of a larger unity; sometimes the repetition is at the beginning (anaphora), sometimes at the end (epiphora)/46/.

6.331 A clear case of anaphora may be found in 4:5-12 (5,7):

5. And they went (hlk), the sons of Rimmon ...
and they came (bw), about the heat of the day,
to the house of Ishbosheth ...

(+ account of death of Ishbosheth)

7. And they went (hlk) by way of the Arabah,
all night, and brought (bw) the head of Ishbosheth,
to David at Hebron ...

(+ account of death of sons of Rimmon).

6.322 On a larger canvas a concluding notice of burial links the three major episodes in chapters 2-4:

2:32 And they took up Asahel and buried him in the tomb of his father, which was at Bethlehem.

3:32 They buried Abner at Hebron.

4:12 And they took the head of Ishbosheth and buried it in the tomb of Abner at Hebron.

Again the irony (or is it pathos here?), so typical of the narrator in chapters 9-20 + 1 Kgs 1-2 (Chapt. III, below; Ridout, Chapt. III and IV), ought not to be missed, and indeed the repetition draws attention to it. Asahel is buried in the family tomb. By contrast, Abner is laid to rest in the heart of his opponent's territory (one might say that his hand came to be with David (3:12) rather more permanently than he bargained for) while poor Ishbosheth, the pawn in the whole story, is interred not only in his rival's capital but in the tomb of the very man who betrayed him.

Vocabulary and phraseology

6.4 Finally in connection with an argument from style it is worth comparing the vocabulary stock of the two complexes as well as particular phrases or formulas that might be distinctive (see also Segal, 1964-5: 324).

6.41 (1) A comparison of vocabulary shows considerable homogeneity. I reproduce in Appendix B, below, some of the more striking items; this list may be compared with Rost's treatment (130-8) of the vocabulary stock of the ark narrative in comparison with 2 Sam 9-20 + 1 Kgs 1-2.

6.42 (2) Phrases, expressions and larger units:

(a) 2 Sam 4:9, 1 Kgs 1:29.

"As Yahweh lives, who has redeemed my life (pdh >t npšy) from all adversity."

These are the only occurrences of the expression in the OT.

The phrase pdh npš is found apart from here in Job 33:28,

Ps 34:23, 49:16, 55:19, 71:23.

(b) 2 Sam 3:39, 16:10, 19:23 (the speaker is David).

"I am this day weak, though anointed king; and these men, the sons of Zeruiah, are too hard for me" (3:39).

"What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah?

If he curses because Yahweh has said to him 'Curse David,' who then shall say, 'Why have you done so?'" (16:10).

"What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah, that you should this day be as an adversary to me?

Shall any man be put to death in Israel this day?

For do I not know that I am this day king over Israel?"

(19:23)

(c) 2 Sam 2:23, 3:27, 4:6 /47/, 20:10

hmš meaning (?) "belly" only occurs in the O.T. in these passages, and then only in a single formula with nkh:

wykhw b... >1 hḥmš ... wymt (2:23, 20:10)

wykhw šm hḥmš wymt (3:27)

wykhw >1 hḥmš (cf vs. 7: ymthw) (4:6)

(d) 2 Sam 2:28, 18:16, 20:1-2, 20:22

The expression "to blow the trumpet" (tq bšpr) is used only here in the O.T. in connection with the withdrawal of troops (see below,

Chapt IV, para. 8. - 8.2). In three of the cases (2:28, 18:16, 20:22), moreover, it is Joab who is the subject of the verb.

- (e) The scene in 2:23-32, the death of Asahel, is closely paralleled by 20:10-22, the death of Sheba. For a detailed analysis, see below (Chapter IV, esp. para. 7. - 7.2) where I argue that the correspondences between the episodes are probably due in general to their being patterned on a conventional (traditional) narrative model. At the same time the use of some of the particular linguistic items (e.g. hmš and tq^c bšpr) suggests the possibility of identical authorship /48/.

Foreshadowing and irony

6.5 Another device employed with great skill in 2 Sam 9-20 + 1 Kgs 1-2 is that of foreshadowing (Rost, 226-31, esp. 230; Whybray, 1968 : 25-31). A particularly fine example in chapters 2-4 occurs in the remark made by Abner to Asahel as the culminating point in his attempt to dissuade him from his pursuit: "Why should I strike you to the ground?" And he adds, with superb understatement as it transpires: "How then would I lift up my face to your brother Joab?" The author then cleverly allows the point to lie dormant; its force only hits us much later when we suddenly find Abner dead at the hands of Joab (3:27). In that scene, moreover, we are not allowed to know for certain Joab's intentions in calling back Abner until the actual deed is done - yet all the time we possess, from the previous episode, the clue to the inevitable outcome /49/. A further case of foreshadowing, if chapters 2-4 are indeed part of the "Succession Narrative", would be the mention of Mephibosheth in 4:4 (see above, para. 3.11), though this is executed with much less skill.

6.6 Particularly in recent years attention has been focussed upon the use of irony in the "Succession Narrative" (Ridout, 122-70; Delekat; Whybray, 46-7). I have already indicated in the present chapter that some strong ironies underlie the story-telling of 2 Sam 2-4 (see above, para 6.311, 6.332); this will also be evident in the discussions in Chapter III, below.

Conclusion

6.7 To sum up, I submit that had Rost properly considered the major narrative in chapters 2-4 he would have been obliged to conclude that it shares those features of style that he (and others) have seen as characteristic of the "Succession Narrative" and on that account cannot be differentiated from it.

E. Theme

7. The argument of the preceding sections brings us hard up against the major aspect of Rost's analysis, viz. his argument (see esp. 217) that the "theme" (Thema) of the whole work is posed in the question in 1 Kgs 1, "Who shall sit upon the throne of David?" To borrow Whybray's words (21), the narrative "shows how, by the steady elimination of the alternative possibilities, it came about that it was Solomon who succeeded his father on the throne of Israel." Clearly if this is indeed the over-arching theme then 2 Sam 2-4 has only the most tangential association with it: the best we could say is that it shows how David came in the first place to have a throne on which to be succeeded. In my view, however, the centrality and significance of this theme of Solomonic succession has been grossly overstated /50/.

Methodology

7.1 First, there is a methodological difficulty in too great a reliance on the thematic method of defining the boundaries of a narrative such as this, since it entails a large risk that the crucial definition of the theme will come, logically speaking, before the boundaries of the material are known. This is in fact what happens in Rost's analysis. Yet it is quite obvious that the reverse procedure ought to be followed. How can a critic be to any degree certain that he has accurately characterized the theme of a piece of literature, at any time a delicate and intricate business, unless he knows what that piece of literature consists of?

The "succession" theme

7.2 Even so, the link between the bulk of Rost's narrative and this theme of "succession" is at best fragile.

7.21 Although I cannot wholly accept Flanagan's recent thesis that the Bathsheba incident in chapters 11-12 and the account of Solomon's succession in 1 Kgs 1-2 were later redactional additions to 2 Sam 9-10, 13-20 (see above n.20), his focus upon the nature of the individual episodes in the narrative is salutary. It is hard to deny that the bulk of the story (i.e. less the Bathsheba and Solomon episodes) is more readily described as concerned with "the difficulties and challenges that David faced in maintaining his control over the kingdom of Judah and Israel" (1972:177), than with the matter of "succession" as such. The central feature of the material is "the most severe threat to his

sovereignty," the rebellion of his own son, Absalom.

7.22 Underlining this theme of "rebellion" is, of course, the Sheba episode which finally punctuates the whole Absalom story with a last momentary focus upon fragile loyalties and ^{the} tenuous nature of David's hold on the throne. If there is any sense in which this segment may be claimed to be designed to show how it was that Solomon came to be king it is exceedingly remote (see also Jackson, 194). This incident (and also the Mephibosheth sub-plot) only comes into focus as "succession" material by allowing the interpretation to slide from one distinct understanding of this theme (which son shall rule?) to another (will David establish a dynasty?) as we saw also in the case of 2 Sam 7 (above, para 2.11) /51/.

7.23 Likewise, if one were to consider the Bathsheba episode in chapters 11 and 12 one would be most unlikely to claim that its essence lies in its connection with the theme of (Solomonic) succession found in some later sections of the story. By virtue of its mention of the birth of Solomon it does have this connection but it has a far more important connection with the rest of the narrative than this. As is widely recognized (e.g. M. Smith; von Rad, 1966 : 196; Hertzberg, 313-4, 322, 377-8; Whybray, 1968 : 23-4, 37; Auzou, 379-80; Gray, 1970:19), it is spelt out in Nathan's words of condemnation to David: "Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house" (12:10), and "Behold, I will raise up evil against you out of your own house; and I will take your wives before your eyes, and give them to your neighbour, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of the sun" (12:11; cf. esp. 16:20-2) /52/.

There is a pattern of behaviour here that is repeated in the following episodes and we are invited to see it as somehow causally connected with what happens in chapter 11. As such it leads us directly to the rape of Tamar, the murder of Amnon and the resulting estrangement between David and Absalom, which in turn introduces the account of the lifting up of Absalom's sword against his father. And the whole story ends with Solomon reliving the circumstances of his own birth: his accession is marked by intrigue, deceit and murder (within his own house, moreover ^{the victims are} his brother and cousin) which he employs as the best means of protecting his own interests, just as David had done in the matter of Bathsheba (see below, chapt. III, para. 13. - 13.43).

7.24 I would argue, therefore, that the primary connection between the Bathsheba story (11-12) and the story of Absalom (13-20) has nothing to do with "succession": rather the first episode establishes an ironic

connection between the themes of rebellion and David's own private life. Similarly with 1 Kgs 1-2, the most important connection with 2 Sam 11-12 is not the fact that the key figure in a kind of elimination game ("Succession") is introduced there - this could have been done quite briefly with much less embarrassment to all concerned /53/ - but that the pattern of circumstances surrounding Solomon's birth provides a measure of the circumstances of his succession which brings our focus back from Solomon and affairs of state to David and his private life.

7.3 This brings me to my major criticism. To claim that the theme of the narrative is the question "Who shall succeed David?" is in fact to shift our focus away from its natural centre of interest throughout the whole story. It is to suggest that ultimately it is Solomon who is the protagonist since the whole story apparently bears on his accession, and that "deuteragonists" are the sons Michal did not have, Mephibosheth, the illegitimate child of Bathsheba, Amnon, Absalom, Shimei, Sheba and Adonijah (see Whybray, 1968 : 21, on the "succession" theme). On the contrary, this is above all else a story about David and not any successor or potential successor. It is David who stands in or behind every scene and David around whom every episode ultimately revolves /54/.

Nor, I would maintain, is the final episode any different. The story reaches its climax not with the establishment of the kingdom in Solomon's hands, as Rost and so many have claimed (195-7, 230; cf. e.g. Bright, 453; Whybray, 1968: 21-3, 29; Gray, 1970 : 16; Ridout, 217) /55/, but with the death of David and the circumstances of that death (I develop this point in chapt: III, below).

By contrast Solomon is one of the less substantial figures in the story, since like Amnon or Adonijah he exists only in relation to a very limited segment of the narrative. "[He] can hardly be said to be more than a minor character," notes Whybray (1968 : 39) /56/. For a story which is meant to reach its climax in the fact that he succeeds David this is a curious state of affairs. After the brief notice of his birth in chapter 12 we do not even find him lurking in the wings as the drama progresses. He simply drops out of sight /57/ and until 1 Kgs 1 the story-teller does nothing to bring him into focus even in the background of events. This is of the utmost significance.

7.31 Following Rost, Whybray (1968 : 22) claims that after 2 Sam 12 the narrative "is devoted to the rival candidates for the throne,

Solomon's half-brothers Amnon, Absalom and Adonijah, and their elimination, leaving the field clear for the triumph of Solomon at the very end", or again (20-1; cf. Auzou, 364) that the narrative "shows how, by the steady elimination of the alternative possibilities, it came about that it was Solomon who succeeded his father on the throne of Israël."

The narrative itself, however, conveys no such impression: we get no hint whatsoever that we are to view either Amnon or Absalom as Solomon's rivals, nor that what is taking place in chapters 13-20 is a steady movement bringing us significantly nearer to the point where only Adonijah ("the remaining rival candidate") will stand between Solomon and the throne. Solomon's ranking amongst the many sons of David is never mentioned in the Absalom story /58/; nor for that matter is the ranking of any other son with the possible exception of Amnon (LXX at 16:21 notes that Amnon was the "first-born").

Any indication, therefore, of a line of succession, ("the alternative possibilities" to Solomon) with or without Solomon, simply does not exist in these chapters. It is not until 1 Kgs 1-2, when the theme of succession does at last emerge prominently (cf M. Smith), that Solomon and his candidature comes into view, but even here we never learn how many sons other than Adonijah stood between Solomon and the throne. The narrator is only interested in making it clear that Solomon was not expected to rule. Adonijah was not only an older brother but possibly the eldest for he was popularly expected to be king (1 Kgs 1:6, 2:15,22).

Thus in terms of the narrative itself Solomon arrives quite unexpectedly on the scene.

7.4 So to reiterate my earlier point: in the bulk of the story Solomon has virtually no literary presence whatsoever. Nor, I may now add, is there in the story itself any noticeable formulation of the theme of "succession" such as might convey a clear sense of significant development or direction in the narrative or constitute the primary source of any dramatic tension.

7.41 This is not to deny that there is any such theme at all. A certain progressive element in the elimination of elder sons is undoubtedly there in the story, particularly when one looks back from the perspective of 1 Kgs 1, where Adonijah is mentioned as born "next after Absalom". Rather it is to argue strongly that this is but one theme in the story, linking at a subordinate level one series of episodes.

7.42 There is a need, therefore, to look again at the question of theme and structure in the narrative and certainly it may no longer be

claimed that Rost's argument from the "succession" theme to the definition of the boundaries of the story is in any sense truly definitive.

F. Conclusion

8. On grounds of both plot (narrative thread) and style 2 Sam 2-4 (2:8 or 12 to 4:12 or 5:3) may be connected with chapters 9-20 + 1 Kgs 1-2. This provides a more satisfactory beginning to the narrative than does chapter 9 (or 6). Rost's thematic argument, that the story is primarily a "succession" history, is methodologically secondary to the above considerations and in any case is itself open to serious question, since in the great bulk of 2 Sam 9-20 (let alone 2-4) the theme of succession has no bearing upon the primary focus of the narrative, viz. David, and provides no clue to the central dynamics of the story. It is at most a subsidiary theme providing a limited level of connection between certain parts of the narrative.

9. In the following chapter I explore an alternative interpretation of the story, some indication of which I have already given in the present chapter. I assume the inclusion of 2 Sam 2-4, and would suggest that my account of the coherence of the resultant narrative itself constitutes additional justification for this inclusion /59/.

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CHAPTER III

AN INTERPRETATION : DAVID AND THE GIFT OF THE KINGDOM

A. The essay

1. 2 Sam 2-4 pivots on the question of David as alternative ruler of Israel to the house of Saul (Auzou 232). Where Abner is cheated in his attempt "to bring over all Israel" to David (3:12, 21), the sons of Rimmon succeed, if only indirectly: whether or not the beginning of chapter 5 (vss. 1-3) belongs in precisely its present form, it is quite clear that the gift of Ishbosheth's head is at the same time the gift of the kingdom (Kittel, 149; Hertzberg, 265-6).

2. There is thus a curious ambivalence about David's response to this action of Baanah and Rechab. On the one hand there is something appealing in his refusal to countenance the violence done to his rival; we are reminded of David's relationship with Saul in 1 Sam 24 and 26 (cf. also 2 Sam 1) (McKane, 1963: 198-9). This focusses our attention on the remarkable fact that David, despite his obvious position of power, has made absolutely no attempt to seize by force the throne of Israel. Indeed it is noticeable in the plot that all the key initiatives are taken by characters other than David, viz. Abner, Joab and the sons of Rimmon (Kittel, 147-8; Luther, 187; Auzou, 235)/1/.

2.1 On the other hand, David's role is not entirely passive. It remains the case that the gift of the head is extraordinarily convenient (Pedersen, 188; Hertzberg, 261, 265): as we have seen in the negotiations with Abner (3:12-3, 21) and as we shall see in the final segment (5:1-3) David is far from being averse to the thought of gaining the kingdom. Indeed there is more than a hint of a public relations exercise in his dramatic despatch of the bringers of the gift, just as there is in his elaborate dissociation from the killing of Abner. Does he protest too much? Perhaps his anger against Joab is directed not simply against an "evildoer" but against the man who had to all extents and purposes put an end to hopes of a straightforward transference of power to himself (cf. Hertzberg, 261).

2.2 The stark contrast he draws between Abner, the "prince" and "great man", and Joab, the "evildoer" and "wicked" man before whom Abner had fallen, prompts sore reflection. Has this really been a story of

greatness and wickedness? After all, Abner had killed Joab's brother and himself recognised (2:22) that this was a serious matter bearing directly upon Joab (H. Smith, 27 ; Napier, 143). Moreover, whereas from David's point of view Abner may well have gone from Hebron "in peace", as the narrator is at pains to observe (3:21, 22, 23), things may have looked different to Joab who appears on the scene in the context of war (3:22; cf. 3:1,6) which was also the context in which we had last seen him (chapter 2) where, of course, he was to be found fighting David's battles and against Abner no less (cf. Mauchline, 211). And whether or not his words to David in 3:25 ("You know that Abner the son of Ner came to deceive you, and to know your going out and your coming in") indicate a motive playing a genuine part in his killing of the enemy captain, the fact that they could be uttered at all confirms this impression that the context may still be seen as that of war. Perhaps, then, from Joab's perspective the incident is merely an extension of the battle at Gibeon. And would David have complained had Joab killed Abner on the hill of Ammah?

2.3 As for Abner, even if we decide that pique and a keen sense of Ishbosheth's ingratitude /2/ is Abner's predominant motivation for his conspiracy we are still left with his claim (3:9-10; cf. 3:17-9, 5:1-3) that Yahweh had promised David the throne of all Israel. On the other hand, in the broader context of the previous defeat and its indication of David's growing strength (cf. also 3:1) we may fairly wonder whether the quarrel is merely a pretext (Kittel, 146; McKane, 1963 : 194; Auzou, 233). Is Abner deserting a sinking ship? Is this talk of loyalty and ingratitude merely a cover for his own skin-saving disloyalty? Are we then to echo with unreserved enthusiasm David's view of Abner (or is this merely for public consumption?), that "a prince and a great man has fallen this day in Israel?"

2.4 Against a simple scheme of contrasting worthiness and wickedness, therefore, the narrator has set other perspectives which put the characters in shades of grey rather than black and white: there are elements of self-interest and deceit as well as of loyalty and self-restraint in this narrative. Far from being polar opposites, as David's speech might suggest, Joab and Abner share much in common for both belong, par excellence, to the grey world of power politics, expediency, and the ruthless initiative (on Joab, in similar terms, see Napier, 141, 143-4; McKane, 1963 : 257-8, 269, 275; Whybray, 1968 : 40-3): they are the party managers. The only difference is that Joab happens to be on the winning side.

2.5 David, for his part, also has some share in this world.

Nevertheless, it remains the case that his restraint in the matter of gaining the kingdom is remarkable. It is something which cannot easily be assimilated to a doctrine of political expediency. David is prepared to risk allowing the kingdom to be the gift of others /3/. It is this that singles him out qualitatively from the others.

3. The gift of Saul's kingdom to David is followed by David's gift of Saul's land and servants to Mephibosheth, Saul's grandson, as a token of his loyalty (hsd) towards Jonathan. At least that is ostensibly what it is about. Yet again there are indications in the text that suggest another possible perspective. The gesture is perhaps less magnanimous than David suggests: it is not merely without cost to himself (since he is giving away someone else's land and labour) but it is also likely to result in a healthy subsidy for the court (cf. 9:9-10) /4/ and it will enable him to keep this last scion of the house of Saul under perpetual surveillance (Kittel, 166-7; von Rad, 1966 : 178; Auzou, 369; Mauchline, 241). There is then a delicate irony in the possibility that in 16:1-4 Ziba's gesture of generosity to the dispossessed David may be no less devious than David's to the dispossessed Mephibosheth /5/.

Characteristically, however, the narrator refuses to allow us the luxury of making simple judgements. We are left with a perception of the ambivalence of events /6/.

4. The gift to Mephibosheth is followed by the offering of consolation to Hanun (and notice again the parallel theme of hsd). This, however, is rebuffed and war ensues. The incident establishes the tone as well as the setting of the following crucial episode, the story of David, Uriah and Bathsheba. The direction of the plot, then, is from gift offered and received, through gift rebuffed, to the polar opposite of giving, grasping by force. However precisely one interprets Nathan's parable in relation to its setting (Simon; Hoftijzer; Delekat, 32-3; Seebass) it is absolutely plain that it encapsulates the essence of David's dealing with Bathsheba; the episode is the story of the rich man who took the poor man's lamb. The ironic contrast with 2 Sam 2-4 is marked: the king who was content to be given his kingdom must seize by force (against Uriah if not Bathsheba) a wife. From Nathan's perspective the issue is clear. It was Yahweh who gave the kingdom. Yahweh in turn will not then let his king's act of violent taking pass without consequences for his kingdom (12:8-11) /7/.

The immediate token of the consequences is the taking away (forcibly, as it were) of the child of adultery. But the real issue will

lie in the events of the succeeding chapters, with the onset of a pattern of events that continually harks back to the theme of "seizure" in this episode.

5. Now it is tempting to find here a straightforward scheme of retribution in line with an unqualified condemnation of David by the author. Certainly the ironic treatment of David in connection with the death of Uriah is the most scathing in the whole narrative (Ridout, 63-73, 102-7, 152-8; Delekat, esp. 26); yet a clear-cut perspective is blurred by several factors.

5.1 First, the stunning simplicity of David's response to Nathan /8/ - "I have sinned against Yahweh" - functions powerfully to reinstate him in the reader's estimation (Luther, 190-1); and indeed Nathan's reply - "Yahweh also has put away your sin" - reinforces this emotional trend. Dramatically this sets up a certain tension with the long term outworking of the pattern of violence.

Something similar is effected by the way the episode ends. David is able, but with apparent impunity now, to do precisely what he had done to set the story in motion: he can have sexual intercourse with Bathsheba, the woman of his desire (11:4, 12:24). The outcome is the birth of Solomon, of whom we are told, "Yahweh loved him" - clearly, for as every reader knows this child eventually becomes king. From the perspective of the end of the episode (which projects to the end of the whole story) Uriah becomes merely a disposable pawn.

5.2 But what then of Yahweh's role in the whole process? Delekat's observation (32-3; but cf. Seebass, 206 n.6), that one way of "casting" Nathan's parable is to give Yahweh the role of the rich man, in which case David is the guest and Uriah the lamb (both of whom are killed), offers an ironic viewpoint that ties in here. It is all very well Yahweh being "displeased", for ultimately he must bear some measure of responsibility; David is the one whom he has chosen and protected, and will continue to protect (17:14). Moreover, from at least one point of view Yahweh in effect blesses David's action in the course of time through Solomon's good fortune. On the other hand, as I shall presently argue, Solomon also stands at the centre of the final outworking of the pattern of seizure and violence within David's house (and bearing directly on the kingdom) which is set in motion by the present episode. Thus the tension between forgiveness (blessing) and retribution is never finally resolved. The narrator's treatment of Yahweh as a character in the story retains a measure of ambivalence if not an undercurrent of irony /9/.

6. An appropriate link between the Bathsheba episode and the major ones to follow is provided by the resolution to the account of the Ammonite war (12:26-30), which provides not only an ironic comment on David as king (cf. similarly 11:1 - see Ridout, 153,157; Schulz, 1920 : 113) but also a striking symbol of what has gone before and the scene that immediately follows. The assault and capture of the city gives way to the seizure and rape of Tamar, and that in turn to the taking of Amnon's life (see esp. Jackson, 189-91). The theme of giving, transformed now into its negative form, is dramatically illustrated here. Then there is in effect a long pause. Absalom is returned to Jerusalem and the king's presence.

7. The next scene (Absalom and the men of Israel) sets in motion another major episode. Although the scene is ostensibly Absalom's it very much constitutes a question about, if not a comment on, David.

Absalom's return to Jerusalem has moved to a climax with the prince demanding access to the king. His concern to be re-admitted to his father's presence is moving:

Why have I come from Geshur? It would be better for me to be there still. Now, therefore, let me see the face of the king; and if there is guilt in me, let him kill me./10/

And the force of the appeal is underlined with brilliant simplicity in the narration of its impact on David /11/: "Then Joab went to the king and told him; and he summoned Absalom". What other could David have done or said in the face of such a cry. The reader is likely to find himself emotionally reinstating the prince; and to lose sight of the aggression of the field-burning incident or the acute problem raised by "if there is guilt in me" /12/ is easy. Such features in the narrative only come back into focus with the ensuing scene which effects a sudden shift in perspective: we find Absalom engaged in conspiratorial activity against his father.

Yet in turn the rapidity with which we find ourselves reading that "the conspiracy grew strong, and the people with Absalom kept increasing. And a messenger came to David, saying, 'The hearts of the men of Israel have gone after Absalom'" (15:12-3) prompts reflection. What kind of conspiracy is this that could so rapidly gain popular support? Just what was David doing all this time? Is it possible that the king who sent others to fight his wars for him - while he abused his privilege as king - had also failed to provide properly for the administration of justice in the land (Kittel, 171; McKane, 1963 : 249; Delekat, 35)?

7.1 We are not allowed a final answer to our query; any judgement we make about the conspiracy must always contend with the fact that it contains one significant variable in the foreground. But while we are invited to see the rebellion as in some way consequential upon the Bathsheba/Uriah outrage (e.g. as the sin of the father working itself out in the son: cf. Kittel, 168-9; Jackson, 189; Whybray, 1968 : 22-3; Flanagan, 1972 : 172) the extent of our sympathy for him at this further deprivation is subject to the suspicion that he may indeed be culpable in the present instance as in the former one.

8. If the nuances of the scene tease us, the main direction of the story is clear: the strongly adverse sequence of events initiated in the Bathsheba episode culminates now in rebellion. The theme of giving, transformed in that episode into a theme of grasping, comes fully to expression here in its original, political form: Absalom "steals the hearts of the men of Israel" and their gift of the kingdom to David is revoked (15:1-13). The kingdom is now taken from him.

9. The rebellion puts David back where he started. This, however, has a curiously positive effect. From the Bathsheba episode up to this point the king has stood largely in the background, brushed in with only the lightest of strokes. Now his presence is strongly felt again, but it is not the presence of the grasping "rich man" of the Bathsheba story, it is much more that of the man who was content to be given the kingdom. If now the kingdom is taken from him David is prepared to let it go without a struggle. This creates once again a certain ambivalence in the portrayal of the character. It has a comic and critical aspect. Yet it is also a source of appeal and energy: some of David's best moments occur in the narrative of the progression from Jerusalem to the Jordan (Napier, 139-40; Hertzberg, 378; McKane, 1963: 253-4, 257-8; Brueggemann, 1972a, 1974) - moments characterized by his readiness to allow the matter of the throne to rest ultimately in the hands of others /13/.

10. In the story as a whole there are strong undercurrents of criticism in the presentation of David. This is commonly acknowledged. On the other hand, the varying qualities of these critical undertones should not be overlooked. The author's stance is not uniform, simply a reflection of, say, the more trenchant ironies that characterize his telling of the Bathsheba story, the episode that provides Delikat with a key to the whole (it is an anti-Davidic/Solomonic/monarchic polemic).

10.1 More often the critical tone is muted. Sometimes it takes the form merely of a suspicion (compounded by the reiteration of the motif of deception) that is allowed to nag the observer - a suspicion that the public face of David may not be entirely genuine, as for example in his lament over Abner, his offer of hospitality to Mephibosheth, or his granting of permission for Ammon to go to Beal-Hazor (Ridout, 147-8).

At other times it is expressed in terms of (usually quite gentle) comedy. This is the case with the rather absurd compromise of his judgement between Ziba and Mephibosheth, or his fatherly inability to find fault with Adonijah (1 Kgs 1:6: "His father had never at any time displeased him by asking, 'Why have you done thus and so?'"). It particularly emerges in the incongruity between some of his most important actions and those one might have expected of a king or hero. For example, he is the king who, as we have seen, in the season when kings go out to war sends Joab to besiege a neighbouring king's capital, while he stays behind and takes his neighbour's wife instead. He is the hero, the smiter of the Philistines (3:18, 19:10), whose immediate response to threat is to abandon his city and his crown. Ridout (158) rightly stresses the irony in this passage (cf. Pedersen, 266); and we may also note the attendant irony in the contrast between the David of Hushai's speech to Absalom, viz. David the enraged bear robbed of its cubs, and the real David fleeing for his life, rather more like a cub robbed of its bear (von Rad, 1966 : 185; Jackson, 193 n.32). Or he is the king who meekly says to his troops when they suggest with cloying flattery that he is an object of great risk (to themselves?) in battle: "Whatever seems best to you I will do." And he is the king who gives away his crown.

11. Yet despite these incongruities, indeed sometimes because of them, David remains the hero of the story, albeit something of an anti-hero. It is when he stands in radical opposition to the norm that his appeal is greatest (Brueggemann, 1969 : 484-91, 1972c : 29-38, 1974: 181) as for example in his reaction of hostility to the murder of his rival, Ishbosheth, and his initial refusal to behave as a king at the news of the death of Absalom the rebel.

11.1 In this last case, particularly, a highly ambiguous situation is created. David's behaviour draws the bitter criticism by Joab: "You have today covered with shame the faces of all your servants ... because you love those who hate you and hate those who love you" (19:6-7).

But as Delekat observes (30), drawing attention to the Sermon on the Mount/14/:

Joabs Grundsatz "du sollst deine Freunde lieben und deine Feinde hassen" is allgemein-menschlich, aber Davids ohnmächtige Auflehnung gegen dieses Gesetz erscheint als Auflehnung der wahren Menschlichkeit, die sich in diesem Gesetz gefangen fühlt.

In other words Joab's attack carries force and conviction; yet the very terms in which it is expressed effect, however momentarily, a shift in perspective which forces admiration instead of condemnation for the man who could so step outside the confines of convention, here the boundaries of political necessity.

And the ambivalence accurately reflects the quality of the immediately preceding scene. David's reaction to the news of Absalom's death is possibly the most remarked upon passage in the whole narrative. Yet to define it either in terms of the genuine humanity of the king or of his self-indulgence is to underrate the complexity of the writing. It is characteristic of the author's skill that the passage functions in both ways. The negative function needs no elaboration. Joab's speech does that admirably. But there is something positive here. There is genuine grief. The narrator breaks his habit (Schulz, 1923 : 197-9) and confronts us directly with the inner emotion of the man: "and the king was deeply moved" /15/. And genuine grief has a magnetic attraction: the reader is cold indeed who can eliminate sympathy from his own reaction to David in this passage. In its positive function, therefore, the passage elicits our identification with the king as man at his most elemental /16/.

11.2 Or to take up again the critical (comic) perspective on the flight from Jerusalem: barely has the news of rebellion come and the retreat begun before we find David in conversation with a powerful mercenary captain, referring to Absalom as "the king" (Schulz, 1920 : 184-5; Ridout 159-60) and, of all things, urging this ally of potentially vital importance to desert him. Yet while from the perspective of the kingly hero the parody is clear enough, from that of the anti-hero it is a matter of freedom. Ittai is made no unwilling captive to a contract. Instead the open-handed gift of total liberty from any bond of loyalty brings an equal and opposite response of total commitment to just such a bond. Ittai will be his lord's servant in life or death: "As Yohweh lives, and as my lord the king lives, wherever my lord the king shall be, whether for death or for life, there also will your servant be." In this commitment lies already germinated the seeds of David's restoration. Ittai refuses to acquiesce to any simple logic of realism (after all David has left the

royal city and both it and the trappings of kingship are indeed Absalom's for the taking): David is still his lord the king (Ridout, 159), and in the event Ittai will play an important role in effecting the transformation of this designation from ideal to actuality again.

11.3 At several other points in the episode a similar pattern emerges: David is prepared to allow that the kingdom is not his to grasp or cling to but lies in the hands of others to give /17/. Confronted with the question whether the ark should go on with him or remain in Jerusalem, he answers, let it remain (15:25-6): "If I find favour in the eyes of Yahweh, he will bring me back ... but if he says, 'I have no pleasure in you', behold, here I am, let him do to me what seems good to him." Shimei advances just this latter perspective (16:8): "Yahweh has given the kingdom into the hand of your son, Absalom. See, your ruin is on you; for you are a man of blood." Abishai's violent response - "Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? Let me go over and take off his head" - establishes the norm. Against this is set David's remarkable restraint - "Let him alone and let him curse" - at the heart of which is a strong sense of his being in the hands of Yahweh, whether for good or ill /18/.

11.4 There is, then, an underlying parallel between David here, where he no longer holds the kingdom, and in the opening episode of the story, where Israel is not yet his. From the comic perspective, there as here things "happen" to him /19/. Although Abner's conspiracy to secure for him the throne of Israel goes badly awry, a fortuitous consequence of this leaves David with the throne in effect secured and without his hardly having lifted a finger to further this end himself. Likewise in the present case of Absalom's rebellion, David's restoration is due in the first instance, at least, to two factors which lie beyond his control - the persuasiveness of Hushai, and the victory of the army (including Ittai who, as we have seen, is there on his own initiative), which pointedly does not include David himself. Even the fact that it is at least his decision that puts Hushai in a position to work his verbal magic on Absalom is undercut by the fact that it is Hushai who initially comes to meet David (the gift of Yahweh?), not David who sends for Hushai /20/.

Seen from another viewpoint, however, none of this is fundamentally an accident but stems from a life-style, howbeit at odds with the norm, which is basically invigorating: there as here, he refuses to grasp violently what is not yet (or any longer) his, he is prepared to let the initiative pass beyond his control. In other words,

to return to our theme, he recognizes, however momentarily, that the kingdom is the gift of others. If, as Shimei urges, "Yahweh has given the kingdom into the hands of Absalom", so be it, says David.

12. Thus the tide turns for him. But unlike the opening episode there can be this time no simple resolution. The parties to any possible resolution are too compromised by their involvement in the past events: nothing can be quite the same again. The David who at the first, however ostentatiously, could mourn the dead Abner and cut down the killers of his rival, Ishbosheth, now finds the scenario more complicated - he must now choke back his grief at the death of his own son and endure the scathing rebuke of the very man who had sped Absalom on his way to Sheol. With his appearance at the gate to review the troops we see that it is Joab's perspective, the norms of political necessity, that has won the day. In terms of the kingdom it is obvious that it is the victory in battle that has become the most important factor in the shaping of events. Any gift is now secondary. Likewise the fact that David has been deposed cannot simply be glossed over.

The prelude to restoration is thus a passage (19:10-11) that exudes compromise and irresolution. Then follow negotiations and more compromise - the buying of support through the appointment of Amasa over the army - before the return proper can begin.

12.1 The fragility of the renewed gift is heavily underlined. Despite a momentary glimpse of the radical David (again with Abishai and Shimei) it comes as no surprise to find that the scene of return culminates in the quarrel of the men of Israel - "Why have our brothers the men of Judah stolen you away?" - and the withdrawal of their support from the king: "We have no portion in David, and we have no inheritance in the son of Jesse" /21/.

12.2 The last scene in the story of the rebellion thus provides at best an uneasy resolution. David, given back the kingdom, immediately initiates violent action against the ringleader of those (many) who had chosen to have no part in the giving /22/. In the plot within the plot Joab echoes his erstwhile master's action: he eliminates his rival, Amasa, and with him another potential source of danger to the political status quo. We need not speculate too much about the precise reasons for Amasa's crucial delay (Hertzberg, 372; Napier, 143; Jackson, 180; Auzou, 396). What little is said about Amasa both here and elsewhere in the story suggests that the elements of disloyalty, treachery and incompetence belong to the configuration of this cameo /23/.

12.3 The tone of the narrative in this last scene is remarkably flat: there is little in the presentation of the characters (David, Joab, Amasa, Sheba) to engage us strongly for or against them. Though the echo of the violence and grasping that emerged in the Bathsheba episode at the beginning of the reign is clear enough there is a difference. Here is not the kind of act that might finally elicit an acknowledgment of sin; it is simply what might be expected, indeed required, of a king in such a situation. Here is neither the appealing dissociation from convention of the king who was content to receive, nor the boldly despotic attitude of the adulterer and murderer; merely the initiation of a rather shabby act of political expediency. This sets the tone of the final major episode in the story, Solomon's accession and the death of David.

13. The pivotal action in the final episode, the giving away of the kingdom, may assume from one position the appearance of being the act of a man who can recognize his inability to cope any longer (David is now very old) and can by choice relinquish his hold over something that he can no longer claim with responsibility to be his. But this view struggles to hold its own. The predominant perspectives are negative.

13.1 One moment when we do, momentarily at least, recapture an echo of a former spirit in the king is when, according to Jonathan's report, he receives the courtiers who come to congratulate him on Solomon's coronation (1 Kgs 1:47-8):

"Moreover the king's servant's came to congratulate (brk) our lord King David, saying, 'Your God make the name of Solomon more famous than yours and make his throne greater than yours.' And the king bowed himself upon the bed. And the king also said, 'Blessed be Yahweh the God of Israel, who has granted one of my offspring [text: Gray 1970:64] to sit on my throne this day, my own eyes seeing it.'"

In the simplicity of his response - no rhetorical flourish in return, just a bow which serves both to acknowledge the visitors and to preface his brief thanksgiving - and the ascription of all that had happened to Yahweh, there is a sense of genuineness and an appeal such as we met, for example, in the king who fled from Jerusalem. Here is the humility of the man who places the gift of the kingdom in Yahweh's hands.

13.11 But the very next word in the narrative is wyhrdw ("and they trembled"):

Then all the guests of Adonijah trembled and rose, and each went his own way. And Adonijah feared Solomon; and he arose and went and caught hold of the horns of the altar.

We are sharply reminded of the context of the report, and made acutely aware of a new perspective: the giving of the kingdom to Solomon is now an occasion not for blessing but for fear. And if the narrator conveyed a sense of simple spontaneity on David's part so here with a superb economy of words he creates a powerful sense of gut-reaction terror /24/. For Adonijah in particular the gift to Solomon clearly means death; and as we presently discover, his intuition proves to be correct.

13.12 This abrupt juxtaposition of blessing and terror forces us to rethink our response. Is there not something strikingly ingenuous about David? Does he not see that the occasion of blessing, the granting of the throne to this particular offspring, must also be one of mourning for the death of the elder son? What kind of divine "gift" is this that can create such a pall of fear, such a negative reaction (cf. Brueggemann, 1972b:167)?

A simple reflection makes it plain that the attitude expressed in the thanksgiving matches little the actuality. It was David and David alone who made the appointment (1:35): "for he shall be king in my stead; I have appointed him to be ruler over Israel and over Judah." Moreover, the speech of thanksgiving contains within itself a hint of the tension here between the ascription of all to Yahweh and the primary orientation of the speaker: "Blessed be Yahweh, the God of Israel, who has granted one of my offspring to sit on my throne this day, my own eyes seeing it." the phrase "my throne" (or variations thereupon; 1:13, 17, etc.) has punctuated the narrative. Any sense of the gift being Yahweh's to give has in fact been almost totally subordinated. The dominant view of the king is clear: the kingdom is his to give. Where, we may ask, looking back to earlier episodes, are the men of Israel now (cf. Fohrer, 6; Delekæt)? Even the opportunity to express an impotent disapproval is denied them.

13.2 But the ambivalence of the pivotal action is greater than this. For from yet another perspective David's giving of the kingdom is in fact illusory. Typically, the narrator allows this, perhaps the most important perspective of them all, to depend upon a crucial problem of interpretation. "Go in at once to King David", says Nathan to Bathsheba (1:13), "and say to him, 'Did you not, my lord the king, swear to your maidservant, saying "Solomon your son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne"?'"

The question is, did he so swear? And there are good indications in the narrative that the claim is to be seen as fabricated for the occasion (Kittel, 179-82; Ehrlich, 213-5; Montgomery and Gehman, 74; Napier, 145; Gray, 1970:88).

13.21 Certainly it is remarkable that any other reference to this crucial promise is missing from the story. Moreover the manner of its introduction here seems calculated to raise our suspicions. Nathan's opening words to Bathsheba, obviously designed to galvanize her into taking desperate measures, are not (as far as we can judge in terms of the narrative) strictly true; despite a rather ominous (and teasing) parallel with the circumstances of Absalom's rebellion (and the murder of Amnon) Adonijah's feast at En-Rogel is not in fact a coronation feast, at least not yet (Kittel, 182; von Rad, 1966 : 183; Napier, 145)/25/. Then it is noticeable that it is Nathan who puts the words of the alleged promise in Bathsheba's mouth. There is nothing about Bathsheba knowing or remembering such a promise, simply Nathan's instructions, "Go in at once to king David, and say to him ...". And finally the way in which he stage-manages an apparently independent confirmation appears highly contrived /26/.

13.22 The strong possibility exists, therefore, that we are witnessing an act of deliberate deception, an ingenious ploy by the Solomonic party. Where David in his senility imagines that he is bestowing the kingdom, in actuality it is being taken from him, not by violence this time (as in Absalom's case), but taken all the same.

13.23 So Solomon succeeds where Absalom failed. Thus ironically it is the son of Bathsheba who brings to final expression the theme of seizure established originally by David's taking of Bathsheba /27/.

Moreover, David had taken Bathsheba and secured his position by effecting the murder of her husband; so now Solomon takes the kingdom and reinforces his hold on it by having the heir apparent (2:15, 22) murdered.

13.3 Any initial elements of rejoicing and blessing, whether by the people (of Jerusalem), Solomon's lieutenant, Benaiah /28/, or David himself, are appropriately undercut by the mood of fear which introduces the last movement of the story (1:49 ff.), a movement towards death (David, Adonijah, Joab, Shimei). The sudden shift of perspective from the gift as a source of blessing to the gift as a source of terror obliged us to reconsider our assessment of David's role in the matter. Similarly with Solomon, for we are now presented with Solomon as a person of speech and individual decision for the first time (1:52-3).

13.31 At one level his response to the news about Adonijah, like that of King David to the overblown rhetoric of his courtiers in the immediately preceding segment, is apparently simple and straightforward. In fact it is far from that: King Solomon responds to a straightforward question ("Let King Solomon swear to me first that he will not slay his servant with the sword") with evasion ("If ... if ... "). The audience may perhaps be reminded of the day of David's restoration after Absalom's rebellion: to Abishai's demand that Shimei be put to death for his opposition the king could reply (2 Sam 19:23), with a flash of that magnanimity which marked him at his best, "Shall anyone be put to death in Israel this day? For do you not know that I am this day king over Israel?" The contrast now is savage.

13.32 The reply is evasive not only because it is conditional but also because the apparent simplicity of the condition (if he prove good he shall be safe, if bad he dies) is totally deceptive. What precisely might constitute "worthiness" and "wickedness", and who is to be the arbiter? The reader has been too much made aware of the complexity of moral perspectives to be taken in by the sham simplicity of the utterance. "If wickedness is found in him," says Solomon. And any surmise that this really means "found by me" will presently be confirmed in the course of events.

13.33 Just as David clothed his deceitful involvement in Uriah's death with public expressions of righteous indignation at the manner of the death, so now we see his son putting a public face on the forthcoming murder, with high sounding phrases of moral rectitude. When the murder is finally engineered the motive is made crudely apparent (2:22):

"And why do you ask Abishag the Shunammite for Adonijah?
Ask for him the kingdom also; for he is my elder brother,
and on his side are Abiathar the priest and Joab the son
of Zeruiah."

Expediency is all. Here it demands that he first break his oath to Bathsheba and then have recourse to violent means in order to provide himself with a more secure grasp on what he considers is now his to hold. Clearly we are back also with the tone of the dying moments of the Absalom rebellion, the attitude of David towards Sheba, Joab towards Amasa.

13.4 In the last analysis, then, David appears dominated by a life-style that stands over against that which breathed life into him at earlier moments in the story: it is an attitude which cannot risk anything, which must possess and go on possessing /29/.

13.41 As though to underline this the narrator finally punctuates his story with the accounts of the deaths of Joab and Shimei /30/. While it is Solomon who is the agent of death (through Benaiah) the focus lies upon David, the instigator /31/, the more so since the stance of David towards Joab and Shimei is now fundamentally no different from that of Solomon towards Adonijah. Solomon is little more than an alter ego of David.

13.42 Having made, so he imagines, the gift, David now tidies it up: there is to be no risk of bloodguilt on his throne (Pedersen, 423-5; Montgomery and Gehman, 89; Koch 1962), nor can the Benjaminite who cursed him be allowed to remain as a living reminder of a conflicting view of David's claim (and so Solomon's) to the kingdom. Those former moments of graciousness and freedom when David rebuked Abishai for threatening Shimei's life are now annulled. David has now adopted Abishai's view and it is merely a question of how to find a way around his own oath guaranteeing the man's life. The answer is a nice piece of equivocation (the effective revocation of his promise to Shimei reminds us of Solomon's broken oath to Bathsheba): he himself is sworn, his son is not. Solomon will find a suitable way to achieve the desired end.

The case against Joab is similarly equivocal. Joab has murdered Abner and Amasa, "avenging in time of peace blood which had been shed in war," and putting "innocent blood" upon David (2:5 [Gray, 1970:98]; cf. 2:32-2 where Solomon elaborates). Once again (compare the answer to Adonijah, 1:52) the moral categories are simple, the case persuasive. Yet, as I have already shown (para. 2.2-4, 12.2) in both instances this is merely one, convenient, perspective. From another the blood is hardly "innocent" nor the killings "without cause."

13.43 While, therefore, there is a strong element of poetic justice in the nature of Joab's death - a fitting one for a man who epitomized the use of violent means in the cause of political expediency and who happens now to be on the losing side (the story as it concerns him having come full circle) - we may pass no simple judgement on him. He is no more villain than he is hero. The fraudulent blacks and whites against which he is finally pictured serve only to highlight the greyness of those who do the picturing. In reality, David, Solomon and Joab all now belong totally to the same world.

14. With the extinction of that crucial, radical difference that characterized, even if only momentarily and partially, the earlier David,

we see in effect the extinction of the character himself. Death comes to him fittingly.

B. Conclusions : theme and perspective

15. The basic situation from which the plot arises /32/ is the giving of the kingdom to David. Structurally the story is simple: David gains the throne (it is given to him); it is taken away from him, but restored (though somewhat uneasily); and finally he himself gives it away, or, as the event may alternatively be interpreted, it is again, but now successfully, taken from him. The story is about a person, David, and in the final analysis its major impact is in terms of David the man, not David as a cipher for some particular political philosophy or institution (e.g. David as dynastic founder; cf. Dolekat). Nevertheless, it is also about a kingdom, Israel: it is formally structured around certain political events (accession, rebellion, succession), while political categories such as the relation between king and subject play a significant role in the telling of the story.

And it is about giving and grasping. This is the catalyst or source of dynamic in the plot. Through it the narrator weaves a subtle correlation between the private and public life of King David, so that curiously the Bathsheba episode dominates the central political events of rebellion and coup that follow it. The king who is content to be given the kingdom (2 Sam 2-4) nevertheless seizes with violence the woman of his desire. The theme of seizure then erupts in the rape of Tamar, the taking of Amnon's life and (in political form) the major incident of the rebellion of Absalom. With the loss of his throne we see again momentarily the radical, magnanimous David who will allow the matter of the kingdom to rest in the hands of others. His fortunes improve and he is restored, but the restoration is marked by compromise. The end of the episode has a falling tone again. The final segment (1 Kgs 1-2) shows the death of the king in the context of the norms of political life. The theme of grasping is predominant and is expressed in terms of David as well as of others (notably Solomon). The kingdom is finally taken from him. Ironically the agent of seizure is Bathsheba, the benefactor her son.

15.1 The author, through the texture of his prose, the significant juxtaposition or parallel ing of events, speeches and characters, and in some cases through the presentation of crucial incidents on a purely inferential basis, is continually exploring the range of perspectives open

to the participants in, and the interpreters of, the situations that constitute the stuff of his story. We find in the narrative no simple tendenz or moralizing but rather a picture of the rich variety of life that is often comic and ironic in its contrasting perspectives and conflicting norms. Not that the author is amoral or immoral; but his judgement is tempered by his sense of the intricacy and ambivalence of the situations that confront his characters. He has a powerful, yet sympathetic, sense of the frailty of man, and this, I believe, sums up his treatment of David, the "hero" of the story. However bleak the final scenes of the narrative, however biting the irony of some of the earlier scenes (especially the Bathsheba episode), it remains the case that David is the one truly engaging character in the story. However momentarily, he confronts us with a manner of action that breaks out of the mundane.

To characterize such a vision as essentially propagandist or didactic is odd, to say the least. This is the work of no pamphleteer nor teacher: the vision is artistic, the author, above all, a fine teller of tales.

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CHAPTER IV

THE NARRATIVE AS A TRADITIONAL COMPOSITION

A. Narrative Patterns and oral tradition

1. A number of passages in the narrative of Judges and Samuel, including the story of King David with which we are concerned, may be shown to exhibit an interesting measure of conventionality or stereotyping. This characteristic, I shall argue, is not only likely to reflect traditional composition but also quite possibly oral traditional composition.

I

The Battle

2. The first group of passages, all from 1 and 2 Samuel, has as its subject matter the account of a battle: 1 Sam 4:10, from the story of the capture of the ark and the death of Eli; 1 Sam 4:17, the report of the battle at Aphek by the messenger who comes to Eli; 1 Sam 31:1, the defeat of Saul at Gilboa; 2 Sam 1:4, the description of the course of that battle by the man who brings the news to David /1/; 2 Sam 2:17, the confrontation between the men of David and those of Ishbosheth; and 2 Sam 18:6-7, from the account of Absalom's rebellion. There is a special circumstance shared by these battles - they are all accounts of defeats suffered by Israel (or the "men of Israel").

2.1 Three of these passages (1 Sam 4:10, 2 Sam 2:17 and 2 Sam 18:6-7) are cited by Richter (1966a : 262-6) as instances of an Old Testament literary "form" which he calls the "battle report" (Kampfbericht or Schlachtbericht) /2/, the basic limbs or elements of which are as follows:

- (1) verbs of movement (yš, hlk, bw),
- (2) verbs of military activity (šp, hnh, nlhm),
- (3) verbs indicating the outcome of the battle depending on the object (city: lkd, lqh; persons: nkh, ngp; often extended to include flight: nws, rdp),
- (4) a concluding element indicating the extent of the war (mn + place name, cd + place name) or a description of the defeat (mgph gdwlh, mkh gdwlh).

For our present purposes, however, his delineation of this "form", like his discussion of particular passages, lacks sufficient detail or scope to be of real assistance. Suffice to observe here that most of the passages presently under examination may be said to fit roughly his loosely defined scheme, although given that looseness it is a moot point whether this observation is of much significance. The fact is that there is room for a much more careful study of this matter of the "battle report" than has been carried out to date, with a wider scope and more precise attention to the circumstances of particular passages before any generally applicable conclusions about "forms", such as those Richter is inclined to reach, may legitimately be made. In this connection the present discussion lays no claim to be more than another initial contribution to such a wider examination, since it is deliberately limited in scope and, like Richter's analysis, selective /3/.

2.2 One other contribution to the discussion of "battle" passages which is of relevance here is an argument by Van Seters who suggests (188), further to Richter's "battle report", that it is an annalistic device, "a scribal convention of recording military campaigns which was evidently widespread in the Near East" Again the argument is only briefly sketched and couched mainly in general terms. Nor does it specifically touch on any of the present passages. On the other hand, his conclusions have about them an air of general applicability following no doubt from the seemingly comprehensive terms of reference that Richter's discussion tends to adopt. It is ^{of} particular interest in the analysis of the present "battle" passages, therefore, to bear this characteristic of Van Seters' in mind. I also present a fuller discussion of Van Seters' argument in Appendix C, below.

2.3 Now to the passages themselves. There is first, in those accounts which are not messenger's reports, a simple statement that the battle was joined, and second, in all passages, (a) an equally brief mention of the outcome (in terms of the flight/defeat of one side), (b) a mention of casualties, usually described as large, on the side of the defeated (cf Van Seters, 188, on the Assyrian inscriptions), and (c) an account of the death of a person or persons of importance usually on the defeated side, an exception being 2 Sam 2 where it is Asahel, on the winning side, whose death is detailed /4/. At its most basic, this last element takes the form of a brief mention of the fact of the death, in 1 Sam 31 this is followed by a more detailed account, while in 2 Sam 2 and 18 the elaboration alone is given without any initial summary expression /5/.

2.31 In 1 Sam 4:10 a note about the ark comes between elements 2 (b) and (c) and interrupts a simple three-part sequence here (cf. 1 Sam 4:17 where it follows 2 (c)). On the other hand it does not disturb the basic analysis of the pattern: apart from the evidence of the other passages for the postulation of a "regular" sequence the context itself indicates clearly that the presence of the ark at the scene of hostilities was considered quite unusual in this period of Israel's history. It is probably fair, therefore, to characterize it as elaboration /6/.

2 Sam 2:17 varies the scheme somewhat, perhaps because of the distinctive way in which this battle opens. Whereas in 2 Sam 18:6-7 for example, the battle vignette is preceded directly by a sentence to the effect that the army went out against Israel /7/, in 2 Sam 2 such verbs of movement are found rather earlier, in vss. 12 and 13; moreover there is here what can only be a deliberate ambivalence: the obvious hostility of wys' lqr't (2 Sam 18:6) in such a context gives way to ys'w wypgšwm (2:13). Whether or not a battle will ensue is thus yet uncertain.

The account then details the peculiar contest between the two groups of twelve. But with the men falling dead together we are already, to a large extent, dealing with element 2 (b) where the details of the severity of the encounter are given. Hence in vs. 17 the "standard" pattern is picked up with an element 2(b) clause ("And the battle was very fierce that day"), yet one which at the same time, through the subtle use of the language, incorporates a standard element 1 expression indicating formally the onset of the battle (= 2 Sam 18:6: "And the battle took place"):

והי המלחמה קשה עד מאד ביום ההוא

1/2 (b)

Element 2(a) then follows naturally, whether considered as normal sequence or a simple case of reverse sequence: "and Abner and the men of Israel were defeated by the servants of David."

2.32 As far as the linguistic affinities between the various instances of the pattern are concerned they are fairly complex, as may be seen in the following table of the central portion set out by elements /8/:

2(a)

לֹא־הָלַיְ /9/	יִשְׂרָאֵל	וַיָּגֶף	1 4:10
יִשְׂרָאֵל לִפְנֵי פִלְשְׁתִּים	אִישׁ	וַיָּנֹס	1 4:17
יִשְׂרָאֵל מִפְּנֵי פִלְשְׁתִּים	אִישׁ	וַיָּנֹס	1 31:1
הַמִּלְחָמָה	מִן	הָעָם	2 1:4
יִשְׂרָאֵל לִפְנֵי עֲבָדֵי ד'	וְאִישׁ	וַיָּגֶף א'	2 2:17
יִשְׂרָאֵל לִפְנֵי עֲבָדֵי ד'	עַם	וַיִּגְפּוּ שָׁם	2 18:7

2(b)

יִפֹּל מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל שְׁלֹשִׁים אֶלֶף רִגְלֵי	מָאֵד	הַמַּכָּה גְדוֹלָה	וַתְּהִי	1 4:10
הִיתָה בָּעָם	מִגֹּפָה גְדוֹלָה	וְגַם		1 4:17
בְּהַר הַגִּלְבָּעַ	חֲלָלִים	וַיִּפְּלוּ		1 31:1
נָפַל מִן הָעָם	הַרְבֵּה	וְגַם		2 1:4
וַיָּמָתוּ				
בְּיוֹם הַהוּא	הַמִּלְחָמָה קֶשֶׁה עַד מָאֵד	וַתְּהִי		2 2:17
בְּיוֹם הַהוּא	וַתְּהִי שָׁם הַמִּגֹּפָה גְדוֹלָה			2 18:7
עֲשָׂרִים אֶלֶף				

2(c) /10/

בְּנֵי עֲלֵי מָתוֹ	וְשֵׁנִי		1 4:11
חֲפָנִי וּפְנֹחַס			
בְּנֵי מָתוֹ	שֵׁנִי	וְגַם	1 4:17
חֲפָנִי וּפְנֹחַס			
וְאֵת בְּנֵי	וַיִּדְּבְּקוּ פִלְשְׁתִּים אֶת שְׂאוֹל		1 31:2
וְאֵת מ'	אֶת י' וְאֵת א'	וַיָּכּוּ פִלְשְׁתִּים	
בְּנֵי שְׂאוֹל			
בְּנֵי מָתוֹ	שְׂאוֹל וַיַּהֲנוּתָן	וְגַם	2 1:4

2.33 These passages, then, are closely linked and the pattern that emerges is basically a tight one. The constituent elements are limited in number, a hard core is present in each case, even the sequence is constant except where special factors have necessitated a change (2 Sam 2:17), and there are some close linguistic affinities.

2.34 But this is not all. In two cases, 1 Sam 4:17 and 2 Sam 1:4, the pattern overlaps with another, quite different, set of parallels.

The News of Defeat

3. 1 Sam 4:12-7 and 2 Sam 1:2-4 both tell of the bringing of news of the defeat of Israel before the Philistines /11/.

A man comes from the defeated army:

2 Sam 1

וְהָיָה אִישׁ בָּא מִן הַמַּחֲנֶה
מֵעַם שְׂאוֹל

1 Sam 4

וַיֵּרָץ אִישׁ בְּנִימָן מִהַמְּעֵרָכָה
וַיָּבֹא שָׁלָה בְּיוֹם הַהוּא

He bears the signs of disaster /12/:

ובגדיו קרעים ואדמה על ראשו
ויהי בבואו...

ומדיו קרעים ואדמה על ראשו
ויבוא...

In 2 Sam 1 he goes straight to David, whereas in the other passage there is some elaboration and heightening of tension at this point - he only reaches Eli, the key figure in the scene, indirectly. David's first words to the messenger are to ask whence he has come. In 1 Sam 4, however, probably because Eli has just been described as being blind, it is left to the messenger himself to announce his presence and say whence he has come:

ויאמר אליו

ויאמר האיש אל עלי

ממחנה ישראל ומלסטת

/13/ אוכי הבא מן המחנה
ואני מן המערכה נסתי היום

David and Eli then ask the same question /14/:

ויאמר אליו דוד

ויאמר

מה היה הדבר

מה היה הדבר

הגד נא לי

בני

Each messenger then replies that (a) the army has fled, (b) that there has been great loss of life, and (c) that two people of great importance to the listener are dead (note the details of the language in the table set out above).

This last pattern, of course, brings us back to the "Battle" passages, for it is the core of the more specialized battle pattern that we have just previously been examining. (Whether the singling out of two people in each of these particular cases is more than coincidental is hard to judge).

Here the parallel ends. 1 Sam 4 adds that the ark has been captured. Following the messenger's report Eli falls back dead. The episode in 2 Sam 1 also finishes with a death though this time it is that of the messenger.

3.1 The pattern as a whole is obviously somewhat looser than the previous one. Certain clusters of elements which are given a fairly standardized expression are linked by the broad direction of the narrative moving from depiction of the messenger to the end of his recitation. A looser set of parallels certainly, but remarkable for all that.

The patterning evaluated

4. What are we to make of these patterns? For a start it is important to clear up two basic issues.

4.1 Following Richter and Van Seters I have tended to talk of "patterns" if not of "forms". But is it not possible that the

similarities noted among the passages are simply fortuitous? /15/.

After all, one could perhaps argue that given a large enough number of short accounts of battles, some are bound to coincide to some extent - a point that is perhaps even more pertinent in relation to Richter's delineation of "form" than it is in the case of the particular battle accounts under discussion.

It is hard to dismiss this possibility out of hand. Nevertheless one can weigh some of the factors involved and remain sceptical.

4.11 The parallels between the "Battle" scenes not only involve subject matter in common but an economy of subject matter. It is not only a matter of what is said but of what is not said. One can imagine a great many features of a battle that might have claimed the narrator's attention but which receive no mention at all /16/. Moreover the rather terse sequence, in markedly circumscribed language, occurs in the face of some important variables, viz. the relative length and particular details of the stories in which it occurs. /17/.

4.12 It is noticeable also that in 1 Sam 31 the pattern in what seems to be its basic form (with virtually a single clause sufficing for each element), while remaining an integral part of the narrative as a whole, rather spoils its flow since it anticipates the more detailed (and aesthetically more satisfying) account of the death of Saul and his sons which immediately follows upon it /18/. In other words, it could be argued that element (c) in its simplest form is narrated in 1 Sam 31 despite the subsequent development of the passage, just because it is part of a regularly employed sequence /19/.

4.13 The extension of the parallels into the "Bringing of News" scene naturally compounds the difficulty in accepting simple coincidence as an explanation of the similarities. For despite a general looseness in the parallel as a whole, there are some remarkable points of close linguistic and elemental correspondence quite apart from the actual report of the battle.

4.2 A second consideration of primary importance is whether the resemblances are due in any way to direct literary dependence. Since in at least one case the set of similarities probably crosses an authorship boundary (1 Sam 31/2 Sam 1; see above, n.1), it is likely to be more than a matter of the literary idiosyncracies of an individual author, though even that would only constitute a partial answer. Rather the literary critic is likely to press for an explanation involving the deliberate

assimilation of one passage to another: either an author has modelled one passage on another, perhaps in order to evoke certain connotations, or an editor has glossed one passage by another, perhaps in order to fill in details or again to create a specific reference /20/.

4.21 Probably the greatest single stumbling block to any such explanation is the complexity of the linguistic affinities of the "Battle" scenes. A glance at the table setting out elements 2(a), (b) and (c) is sufficient to give a reasonably accurate impression of the multiplicity of lines of both correspondence and difference. A systematic check, passage by passage and element by element, simply confirms the impression: it is virtually impossible to discern any consistency in the way one passage relates to any other or others in this respect. There is too much variation from one point of comparison to another. Even where one might have expected the closest parallels, in the case of 1 Sam 4:10 and 4:17, it is hard to say that there is a closer relationship between these two than between, say, 1 Sam 4:10 and 2 Sam 18:6-7 (except for element 2 (c)) or between 1 Sam 4:17 and 2 Sam 1:4. Perhaps 2 Sam 2:17 and 2 Sam 18:6-7 may be singled out since they do appear to share several points of detail which are rather distinctive /21/, but even so each contains elements or parts of elements which are closer to other passages.

4.22 If further doubt remains about the probability here of direct literary assimilation one has only to attempt to account for the numerous small differences in the language of parallel elements to dispel it. Such an exercise simply ends in a degree of arbitrariness that is unacceptable.

4.3 The similarities, then, are in some sense the product of artifice and yet not of direct literary assimilation or adaptation. Certainly the simplest explanation is to postulate that we are, indeed, dealing with material that is, in some measure, conventional. Hence it is reasonable to use the term "form" or, perhaps better, "pattern" (since it avoids some of the former's implied contrast with "content").

4.4 Several further observations are in order now.

4.41 First, we are dealing with passages of narrative, each of which is a subsidiary segment or constituent part of a larger story. In fact, in the cases we have looked at it is hard to detach any of them without doing violence to the larger story, for they are part and parcel of it. This is particularly well illustrated in 1 Sam 4, where

both patterns are part of a movement culminating in the death of Eli, with the core of the battle account occurring again in the messenger's report to Eli. Here the information conveyed to the old man, via the pattern, that is, is essential to the story. Again, therefore, it is very difficult to see either pattern in terms, say, of an editor's gloss. They are part of the basic shaping of the story as we have it.

4.42 I have used the term "story" of the larger context to which the passages belong: the dramatic account of the death of Eli (1 Sam 4), the miserable fate of Saul (1 Sam 31), David's shrewd, flamboyant gesture of respect to the dead Saul (2 Sam 1), the creation of a blood feud between Abner and the sons of Zeruah (2 Sam 2), and the crucial testing of David before his friends and attendants at the news of the death of Absalom (2 Sam 18) - most of these, in turn, probably forming part of larger story complexes. The last two, of course, come from our story of King David.

On the face of it there is little here that is "annalistic" in tone, certainly not if the Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian (or even Hittite) annals or inscriptions are anything to go by /22/. These stories are not dreary records, mechanically rehearsing king-centred clichés. They touch the human condition, indeed are directed to the common man in a way that is rarely found in the annals of kings. The account of the suppression of Absalom's rebellion has several distinct movements, but they drive relentlessly towards that desperate cry: "Would that I had died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son!" The king ceases to be king. From this point on he is simply and essentially man. The blind Eli sits alone. The bringing of the news, that he too has lost his sons, is prolonged. The shout in the town, to Eli, is full of ambiguity. Even in this simple story there is an element of universality that is surely integral to the point of the narrative.

The range of characters (what annalist would have paused thus over the details of the death of young Asahel, swift of foot as the wild gazelle?), the frequent use of direct speech in genuine dialogue, the circumstantial detail in 2 Sam 2:23, for example, all these point in the same direction - this material is the stuff of the story-teller, whatever its historical status and whatever its redactional history.

4.43 These patterns then, belong to contexts where there is a good case for seeing a basic entertainment orientation, where, in other words, the narrative has real value as story /23/.

4.5 Finally, it is significant that the occurrence of this kind of patterning is not limited to the "Battle" accounts. In fact, the second stereotype that emerged in close association with one of the instances of the "Battle" pattern is itself only a token of the extent to which recurrent patterns can be shown to be a factor in the composition of these stories. In order to develop this point, in the following section I shall examine a number of other patterns of this kind appearing in narrative that is congruous with the particular passages which have been the focus of attention so far.

II

Violent Death

5. Six passages telling of death by violent means appear to be constructed on similar lines. They are Jud 8:20-21, Jud 9:54, 1 Sam 22:17-18, 1 Sam 31:4 (= 1 Chron 10:4), 2 Sam 1:9-10 and also vs. 15 /24/. It will be obvious that the passages from 1 Sam 31 and 2 Sam 1 provide the requisite link with the passages examined above.

5.1 Each passage begins with a king or leader speaking to another person (or, in one case, a group) standing nearby. In two cases this is said specifically to be his armour-bearer (1 Sam 21, Jud 9), in 2 Sam 1:15 it is one of his "young men", in 1 Sam 22 the bodyguard collectively, in Jud 8 his eldest son, and in 2 Sam 1:9 a young Amalekite who had chanced upon Saul at Gilboa /25/.

The speech itself consists primarily of a pair of verbs in the imperative - a verb of killing (plus object), preceded by a verb of "preparatory action" /26/:

ודקרוי בה	שלף חרבך	1 Sam 31
ומותתי	שלף חרבך	Jud 9
ומותתי	עמד נא עלי	2 Sam 1:9
פגע בו	וש	2 Sam 1:15
והמיתו כהנים יהוה	סבו	1 Sam 22
הרג אותם	קום	Jud 8

In four of the texts an explanatory clause is added to the instructions and introduced by pen (1 Sam 31, Jud 9) or kî (2 Sam 1:9, 1 Sam 22). In the case of 2 Sam 1:15 and Jud 8 a reason for the killing has already been offered in a speech immediately prior to the present one /27/. Repetition therefore, apart from being unnecessary, would have been clumsy. Each of the reasons advanced reflects its individual context:

- 1 Sam 31 ... lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through and make sport of me /28/
- Jud 9:54 ... lest men say of me, "A woman killed him".
- 2 Sam 1:9 ... for anguish has seized me and yet my life still lingers.
- 1 Sam 22:17 ... for their hand also is with David, and they knew that he fled and did not disclose it to me.

Yet even here there is a more precise parallel than the general structural one. 1 Sam 31 and Jud 9 share a basic idea - the reason advanced by both the wounded kings for their wishing to have their lives ended is that they do not want to be made an object of ridicule or abuse.

5.11 The passages now move in one or other of two directions. Three simply recount the carrying out of the instructions, employing again a pair of verbs echoing, though not necessarily the same as, those used in the instructions:

ימת	ודקרו ונערו	Jud 9
ואמתתהו כי...	ואעמד עליו	2 Sam 1:9 /29/
ימת	יכהו	2 Sam 1:15

5.12 The other three passages elaborate the situation and dramatize the serious nature of the action by relating the initial failure of the instructions to be carried out:

ולא אבה ושא כליו	1 Sam 31
ולא אבו עבדי המלך	1 Sam 22
לשלח את ידם לפגע בכהני יהוה	
ולא שלף הנער חרבו	Jud 8 /30/

Two of the texts then explicitly note the reason (which in the further case of 1 Sam 22 is probably the same, fear being implicit in the forbidding phrase, "to put forth their hands to fall upon the priests of the Lord"):

כי ירא מאד	1 Sam 31
כי עודנו נער	Jud 8

Since in 1 Sam 31 Saul has no one else to whom he can turn he is thrown back on his own resources. He commits suicide (note again the pair of verbs):

ירקח שאול את החרב ויפל עליה

In Jud 8 the initiative is also thrown back on the initiator of the action (here Gideon), while the structural parallel between this passage and 1 Sam 22 continues, together with some close linguistic affinity /31/:

כהנים	המלך לר' סב	יאמר	1 Sam 22
כי... נ	אתה { קום	ו' וצ' }	Jud 8
	ופגע ב		

The action is then carried out. The pair of verbs used at this point in 1 Sam 22 is the same as that in its second set of instructions while in Jud 8 the pair is that of its first set of instructions (the first of these verbs, however, that of "preparatory action" remains constant for the whole of each passage, viz. sbb in 1 Sam 22 and qwm in Jud 8):

וַיִּפְגַּע הוּא בַּכֹּהֲנִים	וַיִּסַּב דָּוִיד הָאֲדָמִי	1 Sam 22
וַיַּהַרְגוּ אֶת דָּוִיד וְאֶת צִיָּו	וַיִּקְם גִּדְעֹן	Jud 8

5.2 This completes the scene. We are now in a position to make several general observations.

5.21 First, it is remarkable that with only a few exceptions there is no elaboration (relatively speaking) in the structure of any individual passage which is not paralleled in at least one other passage.

The exceptions all involve the addition of a short explanatory clause with kl; and of the two such clauses in Jud 8 one merely further qualifies a (paralleled) explanatory clause relating to the failure of the young man to act as instructed (i.e., "for he was afraid" ; paralleled in 1 Sam 31, plus "for he was still a youth"), while the other belongs to the second set of instructions and, in fact, parallels exactly the structure of several initial speeches which were elaborated in just this fashion (i.e. 1 Sam 31, Jud 9, 2 Sam 1:9, 1 Sam 22). Even these exceptions, therefore, are not without a certain similarity.

5.22 Second, it is important to bear in mind that the points of similarity, whether linguistic, elemental or structural, persist in the face of some very real differences in the specific context of the passages. 1 Sam 31, for example, tells of Saul's suicide in battle, whereas 1 Sam 22 deals with the slaughter of the priests of Nob by Doeg on behalf of Saul, and Jud 8 with Gideon's execution of certain prisoners of war. Yet there are perhaps more distinctive parallels between these three scenes than between 1 Sam 31 and that other passage narrating the death of Saul, 2 Sam 1:9, where similarity might have been most expected.

The same point is well illustrated by those segments in 1 Sam 22 and Jud 8 where the failure of the initial instructions to be carried out is rectified by the issuing of a second set of instructions. The formal parallel here (including close linguistic connections) is one of the most striking of all. Yet at the same time there is a fundamental difference in the roles of the characters involved:

1 Sam 22 and Jud 8

1. A says to B:

$x + yC$ (where x and y are verbs of "preparatory action" and of "killing" respectively)

2. B fails to carry out instructions.

1 Sam 22

Jud 8

3. A says to D:

C says (sc. to A)

You (=D) $x + yC$

You (=A) $x + yC$

4. D carries out instructions.

A carries out instructions.

That the formal narrative pattern persists despite such differences makes it difficult to argue that it is merely coincidental and that such similarities as we have pointed to are the purely natural and expected concomitant of the general subject matter.

The Gift of Provisions

6. 1 Sam 25:18 and 2 Sam 16:1 give details of a gift of provisions/32/. 2 Sam 16 provides a clear link with the "Battle" account of 2 Sam 18 since both are part of the "Succession Narrative". Both verses belong to a context where someone, attached to a potential enemy of David but acting independently of him, brings provisions to David as a conciliatory gesture. The people concerned are Abigail the wife of Nabal and Ziba the servant of Mephibosheth. In each case asses are used to transport the food and in each case it is specified that David's n'rym are to partake of the gift (1 Sam 25:21, 2 Sam 16:2).

6.1 Both lists begin with two hundred loaves (lhm). Abigail's gift then includes two skins of wine (nbly yyn), five "sheep ready dressed" (s'n 'swywt) and five measures of parched grain (s'ym qly). The 2 Sam 16 list does not include the sheep or parched grain but ends with a skin of wine. Both continue with one hundred bunches of raisins (smqym). Then where Abigail's list notes two hundred cakes of figs (dblym) Ziba's list has one hundred "summer fruit" (qys). It is very likely that these fruits are the same, viz. figs (Kennedy, 1903: esp. 1571-2; 1904:164, 269; cf. Budde 1902:275; H.Smith, 347; Driver 1913b:318)./33/The quantity in 1 Sam 25, as with the wine, is double that in the other passage.

Leaving aside the two items in 1 Sam 25 with no equivalent in 2 Sam 16 (the sheep and the parched grain), we have a correspondence of content as follows (in order of items in 2 Sam 16) /34/:

<u>2 Sam 16</u>	<u>1 Sam 25</u>
200 loaves	200 loaves
100 raisins	100 raisins
100 summer fruit (= figs?)	2 x 100 figs
1 wineskin	2 x 1 wineskin

There is even a certain correspondence of sequence disturbed only by the position of the wineskin(s), last in 2 Sam 16 but following the loaves in 1 Sam 25.

6.2 Presumably the tendency by commentators to ignore the parallels between the passages is based on the view that they are simply fortuitous, a coincidence of historical fact or narrative detail or perhaps a combination of both. This, of course, must remain a possibility. It depends really upon how impressed one is with the parallels that have been drawn and inevitably there is at this point an element of subjectivity involved in one's decision.

On the other hand it must be borne in mind that it is not just a simple case of coincidence that is at issue. Not only is it a question of whether the particular foods involved are likely to have been included in any list of provisions /35/; it is also a matter of whether the quantities of the comparable items would be likely to be so similar - that is, precisely two hundred loaves, one hundred bunches of raisins, and, where there is a difference, for it to be constant, exactly twice the amount of wine and figs/summer fruit in 1 Sam 25 /36/. Furthermore there is the fact that the "coincidence" extends beyond the details of the list to the peculiar circumstances of the gift (described above, at the beginning of this section). Such an accumulation of coincidence carries with it a certain improbability.

6.21 A variation of the argument would be to concede a degree of stereotyping in the list but to consider whether in real life the offering of a gift in such special circumstances might have followed an established set of norms, including the items and quantities involved.

Against this is the fact that nowhere in either narrative is any indication given that the gifts are considered by the narrator or by any of the characters to be of any such distinctive type. Nor do the particular selections of food and drink receive special attention.

Hertzberg's impression (344-5) of the ad hoc nature of the selection in Ziba's case is certainly that gained from a reading of the Abigail episode.

Pursuit and Death

7. For the next pattern we turn again to the "Succession Narrative", to 2 Sam 20:10-22, and to another context which has appeared in the discussion earlier in connection with the "Battle" pattern, viz. the fight between the men of Ishbosheth and those of David and the subsequent death of Asahel. The particular passage concerned here is 2 Sam 2:23-32. Both passages are concerned with the pursuit by Joab and his brother(s) of certain enemies of David (Abner and Sheba) and both include a link with a landmark of Gibeon ("the pool" and "the great stone"). In each case the death of an important person occurs (Asahel and Amasa) /37/.

7.1 In 2 Sam 2 the pursuit has already begun with Asahel hard on the heels of Abner, but with the failure of his attempts to divert Asahel from his purpose Abner is forced to kill him. In 2 Sam 20 there is a measure of structural similarity to this in that the death of Amasa also occurs in the context of a pursuit that is already under way (that of Sheba) though the precise circumstances are quite different. There is some measure of obscurity about the passage describing the death of Amasa, but the gist of it is clear: Joab arranges his sword and clothes in some particular manner and then proceeds to use his left hand to kill Amasa /38/. It is a case of assassination by deception. This is very much like what we find in Jud 3, the story of Ehud and Eglon /39/.

7.11 With the description of the fatal blow the real parallel begins. Each narrative (and so too Jud 3) gives details of the blow/40/:

2 Sam 20:10

יכהו בה
אל החמש
ושפך מעיו ארצה
ולא שנה /41/
וימת

2 Sam 2:23

(a) יכהו א' באחרי החנית
(b) אל החמש
(c) ותצא החנית מאחרי
(d)
(e) ופל שם ימת

Two basic elements follow this death: (a) the place where the dead man lies becomes a rallying place for the pursuers /42/, and (b) the pursuit is continued. Both are more developed in 2 Sam 20 though without affecting the essential parallels /43/:

2 Sam 2:23-4Cf. 2 Sam 20:10-3

יהי כל הבא אל המקום... ויעמדו

ו' וא' אחיו רדף אחרי ש'

... כל הבא עליו ועמד...

עבר כל איש אחרי י'

וירדפו י' וא' אחרי אבנר

לרדף אחרי ש'

In 2 Sam 20 the pursuit ends with Sheba retreating to a walled town. Joab besieges it and is reproached by a wise woman. Likewise in 2 Sam 2, Abner, who has rallied his men and taken up a stand on a hill, reproaches the pursuing general. Notice the metaphors of "swallowing up" and "devouring" as well as the emphasis on family relationship ("mother" and "brothers");

"You seek to destroy a city which is a mother in Israel; why will you swallow up the heritage of the Lord?"

(2 Sam 20:19)

"Shall the sword devour for ever? Do you not know that the end will be bitter? How long will it be before you bid your people turn from the pursuit of their brethren?"

(2 Sam 2:26)

Joab protests in turn that it is not his intention to continue the slaughter:

"Far be it from me, far be it, that I should swallow up or destroy! That is not true."

(2 Sam 20:20)

"As God lives, if you had not spoken, surely the men would have given up the pursuit of their brethren in the morning."

(2 Sam 21:27)

The upshot is that he is content to let Abner escape, although it takes the surrender of Sheba's head to settle the other matter. The pursuit is called off (see the section below; The Trumpet Call) and with this the effective parallel ends.

7.2 To sum up, there are two main types of similarity here. First there is that between motifs and constituent elements, such as the sudden and unexpected death, the halting of the other troops beside the dead body, the reproach against Joab, and his protest. Second, there are the points of close linguistic similarity, primarily in the description of the fatal blow and the rallying of the pursuers beside the body. All this occurs within the context of a similar overall movement in the narrative, from pursuit, to death, to pursuit again

and confrontation. It is also interesting to see the connection with the Jud 3 motif of death by (left-handed) deception. One is left with a strong impression that there are in these passages more resemblances than are likely to be coincidental.

The Trumpet Call

8. The two passages primarily concerned here are 2 Sam 2:28 and 2 Sam 18:16, the former from a context which we have just been examining (Pursuit and Death), the latter from the story of the defeat of Absalom, which contains, of course, one of the "Battle" passages with which we are concerned. Two other passages that bear an interesting relation to these two are 2 Sam 20:1-2 and, again linked with the immediately preceding discussion, 2 Sam 20:22 /44/.

8.1 The key phrase here is wytq' bšpr, heralding the end of the military operation. Indeed nowhere else does it occur in connection with the withdrawal of troops, though it is, of course, a common expression. Most trumpet blowing in the Old Testament occurs at the beginning of battles, as a warning of danger, or as a festive gesture.

8.11 In both 2 Sam 2:28 and 18:16 it is Joab who blows the trumpet; then we are told that the pursuit of Israel by the army ceases; and a third element reinforces this point by reiterating or expanding it:

2 Sam 2:28

וַתִּקַּע י' בַשּׁוֹפָר
וַיַּעֲמֵדוּ כָל הָעָם
וְלֹא יָרְדּוּ עוֹד אַחֲרֵי יֹשָׁ
וְלֹא יִסְּפוּ עוֹד לַהֲלָחֵם

2 Sam 18:16

(1) וַתִּקַּע י' בַשּׁוֹפָר
(2) וַיֵּשֶׁב הָעָם
מִרְדֵּף אַחֲרֵי יֹשָׁ
(3) כִּי חָשַׁךְ י' אֶת הָעָם

Again in 2 Sam 20:22 it is Joab who blows the trumpet (wytq' bšpr); the second element (wypšw m'1 h'yr) tells of the cessation of the siege and clearly functions as an equivalent to the second element of 2 Sam 2:28 and 18:16; but the next phrase, yš l'phlyw, though it certainly could be said, like the other third elements, to reinforce or underline the point of the segment as a whole, also functions more radically, providing here, in fact, a neat short-cut to the end of the scene as a whole /45/.

8.12 The same phrase crops up again, in the fourth passage, 2 Sam 20:1-2, which starts with the familiar element of the trumpet call, this time by Sheba ben Bichri; it follows this with a speech elaborating the reasons for withdrawal at this stage from an operation

that ought to have finished only with the reinstatement of David in Jerusalem, and ends, in fact, with the phrase of homegoing (element (3)?). The whole passage is then rounded off with a sentence that is strongly reminiscent of element (2) in the other passages, especially as expressed in 2 Sam 2 and 18:

מאחרי דור	ויעל כל איש יש	20:2
ויעמדו כל העם	ולא ירדפו עוד אחרי יש	2:20
וישב העם	מרדף אחרי יש	18:16

8.2 Even in 2 Sam 20:1-2 and 20:22, therefore, it is possible to recognize something of the pattern that emerged from the comparison of the other two passages. The inversion in 20:1 seems to be due to the speech, which performs the function of an element (3) and, indeed, comes to a fitting climax with the pithy phrase that we find in this position in 20:22, but which, as the motivation for element (2), obviously has to precede it here. In fact, of course, the context in which 20:1 stands is rather different from that of the others in that it has been a peaceful operation that has been under way - the withdrawal "from after" David is not withdrawal from pursuit but from following his leadership. There is here, then, quite a striking adaptation (relatively speaking) of the pattern to suit this particular context.

The additional patterning evaluated

9. How do these patterns fit the requirements for comparability with those discussed earlier?

9.1 First, as has been observed in the course of the preceding analysis, it seems difficult in most cases to dismiss the similarities as no more than fortuitous. Then, as far as the type of narrative is concerned, we are only dealing with a limited number of new contexts - the stories of Gideon's war with Zebah and Zalmunna, of the death of Abimelech, and of Saul's action at Nob, part of a larger complex of stories about the fascinating relationship between David and Saul - and it is hard to see how these stories could be radically differentiated from the others. There is the same heavy dependence upon dialogue, the same development of inner tensions - the fate of Penuel hangs in the balance, or the guards at Nob shrink from killing the priests of the Lord - and the same instinct for humanity at large - illustrated most superbly in the proud retort of Zebah and Zalmunna to Gideon (Jud 8:21) /46/.

9.2 The question of literary dependence is a little less straightforward.

9.21 In the case, at least, of "Violent Death" such a theory comes up against insuperable obstacles. Even more than was the case in the "Battle" accounts the relationship between the passages is too complex to be explained adequately in these terms. This is most obvious if one examines the language of the passages, though a similar case can be made out for the subtle structural relationships. Points of linguistic affinity shift continually from element to element.

Thus, for example, in the initial speech the first element of vocabulary in Jud 9 is close to that of Sam 31, the second is quite different (though that in 1 Sam 31 crops up later in Jud 9 in the narration of the act of killing), and rather parallels 2 Sam 1:9, while in the explanatory clause that follows there is no linguistic parallel between any of the passages (though the closest parallel of thought is between Jud 9 and 1 Sam 31). In the subsequent section Jud 9 and 1 Sam 31 belong to different structural types, while at the point where the elements of the two passages do converge again, in the narration of the act of killing, no parallel between them exists in the language, though Jud 9 has close affinities now with the language of the 2 Sam passages, especially 2 Sam 1:15.

Similarly the element of refusal to act as instructed shows initially a close linguistic parallel between 1 Sam 31 and 1 Sam 22 with Jud 8 out on a limb (although using language which takes us back to that of 1 Sam 31 and Jud 9 at the very beginning of the scene, in the initial instructions). But with the ensuing explanatory clause we find that it is Jud 8 with which 1 Sam 31 has close affinity, while Jud 8 in turn goes on to narrate a second set of instructions which bear, as we have seen already, a remarkably close, yet distinct, relationship to the language of 1 Sam 22. And so we have, in a sense, come full circle.

9.211 Whichever passage one takes as one's starting point the same complexity emerges and any hypothesis of direct literary dependence would need to be similarly convoluted. Nor is it just a matter of the number of passages intermeshed. As important is the problem of variation or lack of similarity in the context of similarity /47/.

9.22 Similar considerations apply to the "Trumpet Call" passages, but in the remaining two cases the issue is more open. This is largely because there are only two instances of each pattern postulated. Yet a fundamental problem with an hypothesis of deliberate assimilation still lies, in both cases, in the differences between the passages. For

example, if an editor were deriving details of a provisions list from another context why the inconsistency in the application of the gloss? Why "summer fruit" instead of "figs" (or vice versa), two skins of wine instead of one? And similarly, if it were really a matter of overtones being created deliberately, so that the reader was expected to connote Abigail's gift when reading of Ziba's, then it must be owned that the author or editor has set about effecting this in a singularly obscure way.

9.221 In the case of "Pursuit and Death" Cook (168) suggests, in view of the similarities, that "the same redactor has worked at chapt. 2 sq. and 20", but offers no details of precisely how he envisages the redactor to have worked /48/. One of the points of similarity he notes is the manner in which the murders of Asahel and Amasa are narrated. Indeed the sentences that describe the act of killing are a remarkable blend of similarity and distinctiveness: wykhw ... b ... ʔl hhmš ... wymt gives a common sequence, yet the weapon is different and so too are the further details incorporated in the sequence. Structurally the only obvious candidate for classification as redactional would be one or other of these further details but this, of course, is out of the question as it is precisely at this point that similarity ceases. If there is anything redactional here, then, it must be the basic storyline, a rather drastic assertion in the circumstances. And in fact similar considerations apply to most of the other points of similarity. The problem this raises for the notion of a redactor having worked over one passage, let alone both, are considerable.

In short, one is faced with too much distinctiveness in the wrong places - in the expression of important common elements in the story or major directions taken by it. The upshot is that one has to postulate such a basic shaping of the material on the part of the redactor, without any indication of how or for what reason the shaping took place, that it is simpler to do without him altogether and to look for another explanation of the similarities.

Nor does my earlier argument (above, chapt. II) that the two passages come from the same author settle the matter: for it is far from clear that those elements which 2 Sam 20 and 2 Sam 2 have in common are primarily there in 2 Sam 20 in order to provide a deliberate reminiscence of the earlier episode.

9.3 This discussion, therefore, leads to the same conclusion as we reached in the case of the "Battle" and "News of Defeat" patterns. Deliberate "borrowing" for literary effect, or direct literary dependence, is an unsatisfactory hypothesis by which to account for the similarities. It is simplest to see them as deriving from the conventional or traditional nature of the material. This becomes even clearer if, as the additional evidence suggests, the construction and deployment of such scenes or segments is seen to be a regular part of the narrative tradition. Given the relatively limited amount of extant text available for analysis, it is reasonable to suppose that within the narratives presently before us may lie other, perhaps many other, similarly conventionally fashioned segments now inaccessible to analysis through being solitary extant examples.

9.31 It is clear that though there is indeed a literary kinship (in the broadest sense of "literary") shared by the passages, its precise history must lie behind their present expression in a now untraceable network of influences of story upon story, passage upon passage, conventional structure upon conventional structure.

III

The patterning as oral traditional

10. The force of the argument so far is to suggest that the stereotyped aspect of the passages is part of the narrator's stock-in-trade, a conventional, probably traditional, tool of composition. Furthermore, whatever the subsequent redactional history of these stories, there is about them, as has been argued earlier, much to suggest that they belong to the world of the story-teller. The question now is this: are there any indications that the tradition in which this kind of conventional composition has developed is likely to be primarily an oral or a literary one? Although this cannot be answered with anything like finality, there is, I would suggest, a clear prima facie case that can be made out in favour of an oral tradition.

10.1 The first point is that some, at least, of the material which has been the object of analysis here is commonly regarded as having been derived originally from oral tradition, just because of the period to which it relates, together with general considerations regarding the use of writing in the earlier periods of Israel's history /49/. This is well-trodden ground and I do not propose to rehearse the arguments. It is sufficient to note that there is good reason for supposing that some

of these stories started out in life as oral traditions and that it is hard to see why the tradition that finally saw their recording basically as we have them now should not be essentially an extension of that which originally preserved them. That is to say, even if some of the material had earlier been recorded for the first time and then become part of a purely written tradition, before being given its extant expression, it is likely that it would have retained much of its oral traditional shape.

This is a reasonable supposition, unless, of course, the literary tradition that took it up was already a highly developed one, derived, perhaps, from another culture and with its own distinctive forms and conventions, or unless a long period had elapsed between initial recording and final expression, during which time an embryonic literary tradition had had time to become fully fledged and for "new, genuinely written, literary forms to emerge out of a combination of the old oral tradition with the new academic tradition" (Scholes and Kellogg, 31) /50/. In both cases this would mean that the substance of the narratives had changed radically in the course of its literary history from what it had been when it first entered the literary tradition from the oral tradition. Though both possibilities must to some extent remain open the first suffers badly from the fact that such an extra-Israelite parent tradition remains purely hypothetical.

If, on the other hand, there is every possibility that some of the instances of the conventional patterns that we have examined reflect clearly an oral traditional form then it is just as probable that they all do, whether it is a direct reflection or one that is mirrored indirectly through an intermediary literary stage.

10.2 The second point is that a reasonably compelling explanation can be given for the origination of such a technique of composition in terms of the exigencies of oral traditional narration. In such a context the impetus to stereotype material in this way may spring from a number of main sources, one of which is the facility it lends to the process of oral composition - it helps the creative narrator to compose at speed and yet with due attention to detail /51/ - and another the hedge it provides around traditional subject matter for a usually conservative audience to whom familiarity and adherence to the tradition are essential ingredients of the story. It can also be a great help in the learning of new stories: rather than a matter of strict memorization the process may then be one of the adaptation of familiar patterns and details to a new set of essential data (or vice versa) /52/.

10.21 Nor is it difficult to demonstrate from comparative evidence that such recurrent patterns find themselves very much at home in oral traditional narrative, in prose as well as poetry. Sokolov (432), for example, writing about oral prose tales in Russian tradition, describes similar patterning and uses such terms as "traditional formulas" or "loci communes" for these "typical episodes": "Every typical situation, action, and figure is expressed by its own storytelling formula, has its own loci communes" (the italics are his) /53/.

10.211 Perhaps the most thoroughly observed and readily accessible analogies, however, are to be found in recent work on compositional technique in Southslavic heroic song and Homeric epic, studies in the latter having been considerably stimulated by the field work of Parry and Lord in the former /54/. A particular feature of oral composition to which they drew attention is the technique of composition by what Lord has called the "theme". He defines this (1951:73) as "a recurrent element of narration or description in traditional oral poetry". It is not, he stresses, limited to exact word-for-word repetition. "Typische Scenen" and "Kompositions-Schemata" are terms which approximate roughly /55/. A common theme in Southslavic oral narrative, for example, is the council where the men assemble, one begins to weep, another asks why he weeps, and the reply sets the story in motion; another is the gathering of an army where a chieftain writes letters to other chiefs, preparations are made to receive the assembling host and the contingents are described as they arrive: the arrival of a messenger, the encounter with outlaws in a forest clearing, the course of a battle, all are typical examples of story segments that frequently occur in conventional stereotyped form.

10.212 In the Southslavic narrative, as in Homer, different patterns will vary in length from a few lines to passages of considerable length. Moreover, in its simplest form it may be little more than a carefully memorized and faithfully reported narrative segment used in more than one particular context or story. In more skilled hands, however, largely complete "prefabrication" will often give way to the careful deployment of a kind of framework (norm or type), the content and specific texture of which will be shaped and reshaped according to the particular context of its use (Parry, 1936; Lord, 1960:93; Gunn, 1971:17-31, esp. 22, 31). Further, in the particular case of the Homeric epic, P.V. Jones has suggested that such patterning tends to be of two types: it can be tight, by elements, or looser, by a mixture of elements and "stages" -

general directions which the action takes /56/.

10.213 In the same tradition it is clear that, by and large, the individual traditionist leaves his own imprint on the particular shape and diction of a theme: in other words, the themes of the one individual can often (though not always) be distinguished from comparable themes of another (Lord 1960:93; Gunn, 1971:1-14) /57/. Nevertheless one finds in the themes of the district, say, a large measure of comparability, reflecting, of course, the fact it is still traditional or shared material that is being transmitted or recomposed /58/.

10.214 Given all these considerations, then, it is not surprising to find that the observable relationships of structure, elements and language between a selection of instances of a particular theme from a single author, and more so from a group of authors, can show a considerable complexity. For no theme has an "original"; yet each instance of a pattern is likely to have been influenced by many others which its author has heard from other traditionists or composed and narrated himself.

10.22 Here, then, we have a valuable analogy for the particular aspect of composition that we have been observing in the Old Testament passages. The essence of the material is similar - it is narrative that constitutes story. We have noted sufficient examples of patterning in the material of Judges and Samuel (in the face of a limited amount of text) to suggest that the technique is not an isolated one but possibly a regular part of the process of narrative composition and hence comparable with the process of "thematic" composition. In the complexity of the observable relationships between instances of "themes" we can see that interesting blend of similarity and difference that marked the relationship between the various instances of the Old Testament patterns, especially the "Battle" and "Violent Death" types. And in the distinction that Jones has drawn between "tight" and "loose" patterning there is a clear parallel to be drawn with, on the one hand, say, the close elemental sequence of the "Battle" accounts, particularly that of the messenger's report, and, on the other, the looser pattern of the "Bringing of News" or the "Pursuit and Death" episodes.

IV

Conclusion

11. I have argued that a good case can be made out for linking the patterning of the Old Testament passages examined with a technique of narrative composition which can be readily associated with oral tradition. This is not to deny the possibility of similar patterning occurring in a demonstrably written tradition. That is not really at issue here (although it is not, in fact, easy to find a comparable phenomenon in texts that are the product of a narrative tradition whose subject matter, style, form and conventions are demonstrably "literary" in origin or at least measurably so) /59/. The present argument amounts not to an incontrovertible "proof" that the patterning must be oral traditional but to a reasonable explanation which, all other things being equal, must warrant serious consideration and which, indeed, given on other grounds the likely derivation of some of the material in question from oral tradition, becomes a particularly attractive one.

11.1 I also wish to stress that while it is important to emphasise the probable traditional aspect of the patterning (which is not, of course, to deny that in each case there may also be a highly individual aspect), the case presented here in favour of viewing the pattern as oral traditional in essence does not amount to a proof that the material as we have it comes to us directly from oral tradition. Though that remains a distinct possibility the degree to which the "oral" and the "literary" may have become fused will always remain problematical.

B. Further evidence : stereotyped scenes and motifs.

12. In the following section I adduce some further evidence of traditional story material in the "Succession Narrative". These cases vary from stereotypes that resemble the kind of patterning discussed in the previous section, though in no case are the linguistic correspondences between instances of a pattern as significant an aspect as in those examples, to the purely abstract motif, i.e. a traditional segment of narrative structure or a coherent cluster of elements, a narrative image, which is defined without reference to specific linguistic expression (Scholes and Kellogg, 27, 131; Thompson, I/9-11, 19).

In some cases there is clear evidence of the existence of the stereotype elsewhere in the OT narratives of Genesis to Kings; in others the existence of the pattern may reasonably be inferred from its occurrence as a story-teller's motif in other literature.

I

David and the Sons of Zeruiah

13. In the highly contrived account (Jackson, 194; Auzou, 395; Flanagan, 177) of David's withdrawal from and return to Jerusalem (2 Sam 15-16, 19-20) we notice on both journeys an incident involving Abishai (16:5-13, 19:6-23). The stereotyped nature of the segments is clear enough. David is confronted by an avowed enemy. Abishai wishes to kill the man. David will have none of it and expresses a sense of dissociation or friction in terms that begin with ^{the} formula, "What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah?". The man is then allowed to go his way.

If we turn back to 1 Sam 26 a similar pattern emerges, except that this time there is no explicit expression of friction. "Joab's brother, Abishai the son of Zeruiah," goes down with David to Saul's camp. David comes upon the sleeping Saul. Abishai wishes to kill him /60/. David refuses and they go their way.

13.1 Now it is noticeable in 16:10 and 19:23 that David does not address Abishai by his own personal name. Rather he is seen as representative of the "sons of Zeruiah" (cf. McKane, 1963 : 256 : "the saying is directed against Joab as well as Abishai"). The implication is that there is a characteristic relationship of friction between David and his nephews, the sons of Zeruiah; this kind of conflict might equally have been expected if it had been Joab (or Asahel) instead of Abishai who was involved /61/.

This brings us to the story of David and Joab in 2 Sam 3.

Here the pattern is modified in one important respect: David is not in a position to prevent death (here that of Abner). Nevertheless his attitude is made clear to Joab: "it was told Joab, 'Abner the son of Ner [i.e. the enemy] came to the king, and he let him go, and he has gone in peace'" (3:23). Joab (and note that in vs. 30 it is "Joab and Abishai")

kills Abner. David's expression of dissociation then forms the basis of the rest of the chapter (note that Joab is made to eat humble pie) and concludes, in characteristic terms (3:39), "These men, the sons of Zeruiah, are too hard for me."

The pattern surfaces again in the story of the death of Absalom in chapters 18 and 19. David orders Joab and Abishai (and Ittai) to "deal gently for my sake with the young man Absalom" (18:5, cf. vs. 12). Nevertheless when Joab confronts his (and David's) enemy, helpless in a tree, he kills him. David's reaction is to make it quite clear that he disapproves (18:32 - 19:5). In this case, however, there is a nice twist to the end. The roles of the chapter 3 incident are reversed: the sense of friction is expressed with vigour by Joab (vss. 6-8) and it is David who is obliged to back down. The wheel has come full circle!

13.2 Finally it is possible to detect vestiges of the same patterning in at least one other passage. In 21:15-17 /62/ we read of David fighting against the Philistines, growing weary, being rescued by Abishai, and being adjured by his men to go out to battle no longer. In terms of the stereotype we have David confronting an enemy and exhibiting "weakness", the son of Zeruiah as the man of action (who in this case, like Joab in chapters 3 and 19, actually kills the enemy) and there is an expression of friction, which, if the "men of David" are taken as a surrogate for Abishai, has its particular parallel in the end of the Absalom episode where it is Joab who berates David rather than vice versa /63/.

13.3 Now clearly this kind of patterning, particularly as it emerges in the first two passages is very similar to what I have examined in section A, above, except perhaps that the individual segments do not exhibit such close parallels of language as most of those examples. The stereotyped nature of the material is also noticeable when one realizes that between them the passages account for nearly all the stories (as distinct from mere mention) of Abishai, and for two of only eight stories of Joab, in Samuel and Kings. In view, moreover, of the range of material in which the pattern crops up, it seems fair to conclude that there is every possibility of its being a traditional one; in this case part of the stock in trade of a story-teller dealing with the stories of David and his men. The role of the sons of Zeruiah vis-à-vis David has in time been encapsulated in a memorable and easily deployed stereotype.

13.4 In terms of dramatic value this particular stereotype has a special piquancy. It is good story-telling material not just because it deals with conflict over whether to kill or not to kill, but because

it embodies a fascinating love-hate relationship between the protagonists. "What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruah?" asks David in exasperation. The answer, of course, is "everything" - for they are his right hand men. Another answer might be that they are the sons of Zeruah: that is to say, they are David's sister's sons (according to 1 Chron 2:13-17); consequently they are bound in loyalty by ties of blood. In a sense, therefore, the matronymic is a constant reminder of this dramatic predicament /64/.

The Judgement-eliciting Parable

14. In 2 Sam 14 the woman of Tekoa tells David a fabricated story (parable) designed to elicit a particular response which then pre-empted his judgement on a matter concerning himself. The same technique is also used by the narrator in chapter 12, with Nathan's story of the rich man and the poor man's lamb. A third example occurs outside the "Succession Narrative" in a narrative in 1 Kgs 20 where one of the sons of the prophets tricks the king of Israel into self-condemnation by just such a parable (Simon, 220-5; Hoftijzer, 419-21).

14.1 Simon (220-1; he adduces also Isa 5:1-7 and Jer 3:1-5 /65/) terms the parable a "judicial parable" and stresses that the essence of the story is that it poses a "legal" issue and involves a (proper) judge passing sentence upon himself /66/. Thus he writes (222) of Isa 5:3-4 as "no more than a rhetorical-literary transformation of the actual appeal to the king or judges at the gate" /67/.

4.11 Now if Simon really is suggesting, as it would appear, that this is a "literary genre" with a primary connection with a "legal" setting of kings and "judges at the gates", then one must observe that as such it can hardly have enjoyed much of a vogue. After all it presupposes the litigant having a case against the king or judge together with a willingness to, as it were, put them in the dock by a deliberate deception; altogether, I should have thought, a rare and risky event in the ancient world, unless perhaps it were purely a prophetic genre for use in legal or royal situations. But then the woman of Tekoa is not a prophet /68/.

4.12 On the contrary it seems to me that the legal element is merely an accident of these particular cases where the one to whom the parable is addressed happens to be a king with (implicit) judicial powers. Certainly this lends an added piquancy to the situation.

But in terms of the function of the parable in these stories this is irrelevant. The judgement may be any sort of judgement - moral, legal, or aesthetic, to note but three possibilities. All that is required is that the parable provide a sufficiently apt parallel to the addressee's situation that he make the right judgement (i.e. one that suits the deceiver's purpose) and that when the key is provided ("you are the man") he cannot escape the force of its application to his own case.

14.2 The essential features of these particular parables are, first, the deception (as Simon rightly observes /69/); the parable is presented in such a way that its nature as parable is not apparent to the addressee; second, the aptness of the parallel /70/; and third, a judgement or evaluation by the addressee that suits the deceiver's purpose.

14.21 All these features invite the recognition that, as the parables stand, they are firmly rooted in their context. While Rofé (153) may be right to say of the parable in general that it is "a story designed from its inception for its moral" this is only true for our parables in the limited sense that they are designed by a particular person in order that another particular person may draw a particular lesson ("moral") /71/. Apart from those persons these parables are meaningless.

14.22 Moreover, their significance in the context is fundamentally bound up with their success (the third feature). It is no accident that all these stories are stories of successful deceptions. If the addressee were to give the wrong answer to the parable (e.g. if David had said to Nathan, "Well, I'm sorry for the poor man, but there may be more to this than meets the eye - take the case to the local examining magistrate") the parable would be ludicrously pointless. That is to say, it is only the story of effective deception by parable that bears repeating.

14.3 My point then is this. Where ever else parables may occur (wisdom literature, prophetic oracles or whatever) these particular ones are thoroughly at home in their narrative setting. And in this setting the actual parable itself functions as one element in a constellation of elements forming a narrative stereotype or motif - the imparting of self-knowledge by parable - which comes to concrete expression here in three distinct stories. The suitability of the motif for story-telling is obvious: it has, built in, the favourite ingredients of deception and irony, while an element of suspense, the risk of death, say, may also play some part, depending on the version. In addition the construction of the actual parable is a challenge to the artistic skill of a narrator.

14.31 That it is, and has been, a popular motif of story-telling of many kinds (folk tale, anecdote, novella) may be amply demonstrated from Thompson's Motif-Index (J 80-99) /72/.

14.311 Let me take one example from a French fifteenth century A.D. collection of novelle (Robbins, tale 10), which, in conjunction with our OT examples, illustrates well the essential structure of the motif by virtue (if that is the right word in the context) of the very difference of its particular expression and moral tone, though it, too, like the Nathan/David story, involves a ruler and his adultery.

A young/counsellor refuses to arrange extra-marital assignations for his newly married lord, a great nobleman of England. His master therefore sets about involving him in what is in this case not a spoken but an acted parable. Taking good care to disguise any connection between what he is about to do and the earlier refusal he arranges for the young man to be fed no other food than his favourite - eel pie, no less. After initial delight the counsellor comes by degrees to strongly protest the monotony: "By God, my lord, order them to bring me some other food to recover my appetite otherwise I'll waste away". The nobleman then provides the key to the parable: "And don't you think that I might be bored". The counsellor takes the point and the nobleman resumes his affairs.

14.4 Thus in the "Succession Narrative", in these anecdotes of the judgement-eliciting parable, we have material (that is, the structure or motif in question) that suits admirably our focus upon the narrative as a story. And once more it is material that is likely to be traditional. Given its popularity in other literature, the occurrence in Kings and the fact that it is used twice in the "Succession Narrative" the presumption must be, I think, that our narrator was not the first to deploy the motif in Hebrew story-telling.

14.5 Whether these particular versions of the motif are themselves traditional (in whole or part) is another matter. It is conceivable that these are merely Davidic versions of stories told of other prophets or other kings (and ^{not} necessarily kings) - stories of a prophet or counsellor rebuking by this means a ruler for adultery, or of a courtier interceding thus on behalf of a ruler's son. The evidence for any final decision is lacking. Nevertheless there are some features in the story of the woman of Tekoa, quite apart from the use of the motif itself, that suggest a debt to tradition.

14.51 (1) The Woman Intercedes. In several respects the interview between David and the woman of Tekoa is reminiscent of the scene in 1 Sam 25 describing Abigail's intercession with David (Hoftijzer, 424-7; cf. Budde, 1902:XVI; Segal, 1964-5 : 326). 2 Sam 14 is a more complicated episode in that woven into it is the deception story; but otherwise both scenes involve a woman interceding with the king for herself and her family, and both are concerned with themes of bloodshed and revenge.

14.511 In addition there are the following parallels of detail (disregarding the order of the elements):

<u>1 Sam 25</u>	<u>2 Sam 14</u>
1.(23-4)	(4)
And she fell before David upon her face, and bowed to the ground. She fell at his feet and said:	And she fell on her face to the ground; and bowed and said:
2.(24)	(9)
"On <u>me</u> , my lord, is the guilt (<u>h^cwn</u>)"	"On me, my lord the king, is the guilt (<u>h^cwn</u>)"
(This phrase occurs only here in the OT; cf. Hoftijzer, 424)	
3.(24)	(12)
"Pray let your handmaid (<u>ḥmh</u>) speak in your ears, and hear the words of your handmaid."	"Pray let your handmaid (<u>špḥh</u>) speak a word to my lord the king."
4.(35)	(8)
And he said to her, "Go up in peace to your home; see I have hearkened to your voice, and have granted your petition"	And the king said to the woman, "Go to your house, and I will give orders concerning you."

14.512 Though I would not wish to press the matter too far, it seems to me that there are some indications here of traditional stereotyping, not only of the framework (the approach to the king, appropriate formulas of introduction, king's response) but also of the subject matter (themes of revenge and bloodguilt in the context of a woman's intercession with the king).

14.52 (2) The Fratricide. One further piece of evidence for traditional composition in 2 Sam 14:1^{as} has been observed (Klaehn, 39; Blenkinsopp, 1964:449; 1966:51), the fictional tale told by the woman of Tekoa has a certain parallelism not only with the Absalom/Amnon incident which it is designed to parallel but also with the myth of Gen 4:1-16, the Cain and Abel story. The fratricide is in danger of imminent death and needs the protection of a royal/divine decree; in both cases they are out "in the field" by themselves when the murder takes place; Cain is destined to be a "wanderer on the face of the earth", while to the woman there will be left no remnant "on the face of the earth."

The Woman who Brings Death

15. It is remarkable how in the major episodes of the story of King David (David and Ishbosheth; David and Uriah; David and Absalom; David, Solomon and Adonijah) a woman is so often an important catalyst in the plot (Rizpah, Saul's concubine; Bathsheba; Tamar; Abishag, David's concubine). One is reminded of the key role of Potiphar's wife in the Joseph story.

15.1 Blenkinsopp (1966:52-6) detects in the Bathsheba story a motif of the woman who brings death /73/, and observes that this is common in ancient literature and that it is also to be found in the work of the "J" writer (this is in line with the special interests of Blenkinsopp's paper) - he notes (a) the case in Gen 38 of the marriage of Judah with the daughter of the Canaanite Shua (i.e. Bathshua; = ? Bathsheba; cf. 1 Chron 3:5) which is followed by the violent death of the first two children born to their marriage; and (b) the classic case, at the beginning of the primeval history, of Eve, the Woman who brings death.

15.2 But Bathsheba is only one woman who brings death in the story of King David. Each of the women listed above is a catalyst in a story of death. The quarrel over Rizpah leads, indirectly but relentlessly, to the destruction of both Ishbosheth (the owner) and Abner (the claimant); the seduction of Bathsheba brings in its train the death of Uriah (the owner) and the illegitimate child (a token for David, the claimant?); the rape of Tamar leads to the death of Amnon (the claimant) and Absalom (her protector); and finally David's concubine Abishag, is the occasion of the deaths of Adonijah (the claimant) and Joab /74/.

15.3. It is also interesting to observe the regular occurrence of two deaths. This is also the pattern in the case of the Bathshua of Gen 38 and in a more obvious parallel to the motif in Genesis, viz. the story of Dinah (Gen 34), where both Hamar and Schechem meet their deaths through the woman.

15.4 Such observations, therefore, lead to the suggestion that the material is structured around a traditional folk motif.

The Woman and the Spies

16. The story of the lucky escape of Jonathan and Ahimaaz (2 Sam 17:17-20) is another segment in the narrative that brings one directly into the orbit of the teller of tales where stories of escape by deception are legion (cf. Thompson, K500-699). In this case there are sufficient shared features with the story of the spies at Jericho (Jos 2) to again suggest a particular traditional stereotype /75/. There are two spies in or at a city. The king of the city learns of their presence and sends men to find them. They are hidden in a house (under something) by a woman. The king's men come to the house and demand the spies be given up. But the woman gives false directions, the pursuers go on their way, fail to find the spies, and return^{to} the city. The spies escape.

16.1 There are, in addition, several further elements of detail that point to a common stereotype.

16.11 It is curious that in 2 Sam 17 we read that "they came to the house of a man at Bahurim, who had a well in his courtyard; and they went down into it. And the woman took and spread a covering over the well's mouth". Not "the man's wife" or "his wife" but simply "the woman". And in any case why not the man himself? It is as though at this point the conventional pattern (seen elsewhere in the Rahab story) is asserting itself. The motif required is one of escape through being hidden by (an unknown?) woman.

16.12 It is also a curious fact that in neither case are we told that the pursuer's searched the house. Rather the narrator is content for them to be given (false) directions by the woman. Yet this renders rather pointless the account of the hiding. In other words there are really two distinct motifs here, viz. escape by a cunning mode of hiding and escape through a confederate giving false directions, and these have not been combined in a completely successful way /76/. The fact that both

stories offer us not only substantially the same two motifs (cf. the variety of suitable motifs in Thompson, K500-699: e.g. "disguise" instead of "hiding"), with merely differences of detail, but also the same somewhat unsuccessful manner of construction: argues strongly for their being derived from a common stereotype.

16.13. In both cases the pursuers assume that the spies are (or have been) in this particular house. This is quite explicit in Jos 2:3 ("Bring forth the men that have come to you, who entered your house") and may be inferred in 2 Sam 17:20 ("Where are Ahimaaz and Jonathan?" And the woman said to them, "They have gone ..."), where the directness and specificity of the pursuers' question (there is no explanatory preamble) and the manner of the woman's reply (she makes no attempt to deny that she has seen the spies) are not such as we might have expected were the narrator thinking of this as a random enquiry.

16.131 Now this knowledge on the part of the pursuers makes good sense in the Rahab story where the men go first to the woman's house: from the context it is clear that they are seen there and that this is reported to the king with the inference being drawn that they are spies (only the inference is given explicit expressions in the actual narrative). In the case of Ahimaaz and Jonathan, however, they are seen at En-Rogel and flee from there to Bahurim, and it is at Bahurim that they seek and find refuge in the house. How then do the pursuers know about this particular house? We need at least some other indication of the two men having been spotted again in order that the pursuers' knowledge fit that narrative smoothly.

16.132 One reasonable explanation for the omission (though certainly not the only one) is that the pursuers' knowledge belongs to the stereotype and that the stereotype is more suitably decked out in Rahab's clothes, so to speak, than those of Ahimaaz and Jonathan. What has gone amiss in the "Succession Narrative" version is that the narrator has introduced Behurim into the story, probably because it provides the fine irony that the scene of Shimei's cursing, only a few passages earlier (16; 5-13), is now the place of refuge for David's spies who carry news that is crucial for his survival.

16.14 Note finally that the false direction of the pursuit is connected in each case with water.

The Two Messengers

17. The critic who wishes to press the "Succession Narrative" into simple historiographical, political or didactic moulds is faced with intractable material in the account of the actual bringing of the news of victory and of Absalom's death to David at Mahanaim (2 Sam 18). For this narrative is sheer entertainment. It adds no information of any importance whatsoever for our understanding of the war or of the motives and roles of the leading characters. Nor does it teach us anything in particular; although it is possible that a didactic folk motif, viz. the round-about route may actually be the more straightforward (cf. Thompson, J2119. 2.1 and 2; also J 266), underlies at least in part the account of the race, this is no more than hinted at. Rather the tale of the race is essentially a tale of suspense which at the same time, by creating a "build-up" to David's reaction to the news of the battle, serves to heighten the emotional impact of his response as well as the irony in the ambivalence of his attitude to the victory /77/.

17.1 The suspense lies not just in our being given "ample time to ponder how David is likely to receive the report" (Ridout, 97) but also in the way this is likely to affect the messenger - will he receive reward or might he, like the messengers of 2 Sam 1 and 4 /78/ be the object of violent displeasure (Gressmann, 182; Budde, 286; Hertzberg, 360-1; McKane, 1963:266-7)? The ominous overtone is never made explicit but is simply and effectively conjured up by the hint of understatement in Joab's words ("The king's son is dead ... you will have no reward for the tidings") coupled with his extreme reluctance to let the young man run and the fact that it is a (mere, disposable?) Cushite who is despatched first.

17.2 But it is probably not only the clues provided by the narrator himself that are meant to alert the reader to this undercurrent of risk. To an audience familiar with stories of kings, wars and courtly intrigue, the delicacy of the messenger's task and its risks and rewards would be a theme to which it would be immediately sensitive (cf. Thompson, J1675.2 (cf. J815), P14.9, R3) /79/. As it turns out the young Ahimaaz is more than equal to the task and manages to convey the news of victory yet equivocate on the potentially risky matter of Absalom's death /80/, while the narrator then dissipates the messenger-orientated tension in the introversion of David's emotional outburst, which then redirects the focus of the narrative.

17.3 The reception of the messenger is not the only element in the episode that is susceptible to interpretation as traditional story material. I have already indicated above the possibility of another motif (the roundabout way may be the quickest) underlying part of the tale; similarly the eagerness of the young hero to be in the forefront of the action, against the advice of his older and wiser guardian, has a certain stereotyped quality that might suggest a traditional background (cf. Parry and Lord, I/273-4; 419 ((10) and 11)); 81-2).

17.4 Moreover, there are particular descriptive features in the passage that show signs of stereotyping.

17.41 The report of a messenger's arrival is a favourite topic of elaboration in folk narrative (Chadwick, passim; Lord, 1960:80-1). Its dramatic potentialities are obvious: it provides a change of focus, a chance to express (if the narrator so desires) the expectations and attitudes of the receiving party, and, of course, can act as a retarding agent (Ridout, 100-1) drawing out the suspense.

Here the elaboration in terms of a watchman scene is reminiscent of the scene in the story of Jehu (2 Kgs 9:17-20). In each case the watchman aloft has successive reports to make to the king and the movements of two messengers are the focus of attention. The identification of one of the arrivals forms the climax (and conclusion) of the watchman's part in the scene (though in 2 Kgs 9 the two messengers are not arriving, but sent out, in turn, to meet the arrivals):

"I think the running of the foremost is like the running of Ahimaaz the son of Zadok" (18:27).

"And the driving is like the driving of Jehu, son of Nimshi" (2 Kgs 9:20).

17.42 18:27 contains also a formulaic reminder of another messenger scene in the "Succession Narrative". Just as the watchman's identification of Ahimaaz draws the comment from the king that "He is a good man (yš twb) and comes with good news (ʔl bšwrh twbh ybw)," so in 1 Kgs 1:42-3 the arrival of Jonathán the son of Abiathar with news for Adonijah prompts Adonijah to say, "Come in (b) for you are a worthy man (yš hyl) and bring good news (twb tšr)" My concern is not with the rather curious notion involved (see McKane, 1963:267; Mauchline, 288) but with its character as a cliché in such a scene.

Uriah's Letter

18. The motif of a man carrying a written order for his own execution is widely attested in story the world over (Gunkel, 1921:132; Thompson, K978). Its inherent qualities of irony and suspense make it of the very stuff of story-telling. Indeed, like the use of the judgment -eliciting parable, one may be quite sure that it has thrived more in the telling than in the event. Although this is the only occurrence we have in extant ancient Hebrew literature it is unlikely that the story of Uriah was the first or only time such a motif was employed by Israelite narrators.

II

Conclusion

19. In this section (B) I have examined a number of passages that appear to be structured according to stereotypes which may readily be classed as elements in a story-telling tradition. In most instances the stereotype may be demonstrated from within the OT itself, although in the cases of "The Two Messengers" and "Uriah's Letter" it is a matter of inference from similar material in other literature. Of course, as already observed in conclusion to section A, none of this adds up to incontrovertible "proof" that the material as it appears in the story of King David is traditional; resemblances may be explained as coincidental, literary or historical accidents, and in the case, say, of Uriah's letter it is possible that such an incident did happen, just as it is reported. My argument is simply that the presence of an accumulation of such apparent stereotypes, together with (a) evidence that the narrative is highly crafted and artistically motivated (see esp. Chapters I and III) and (b) the evidence of the patterning examined in section A, makes it eminently reasonable to classify the material as traditional. How it might then relate to historical "fact" is a quite separate issue which being highly complex and strictly secondary to the matter in question, I do not propose to discuss here.

19.1 Whether the stereotypes are oral as well as traditional is again a more difficult question. While it remains quite likely that they derive from oral tradition, even directly so, without the close linguistic

correspondences between instances of a stereotype such, such as were evident in Section A. I cannot point as I did there, to a particular compositional technique that is so characteristically oral. Clearly motifs such as the judgement-eliciting parable and the Uriah letter may be firmly ⁿesconced in a "written" literary tradition, as the extra-Biblical parallels show. In itself, then, the material examined in this section adds little to the conclusion reached in Section A concerning the problem of determining the precise relationship of the narrative to oral tradition.

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CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

1. In recent years the so-called "Succession Narrative" has been variously described as history writing, theology, political propaganda and didactic literature. I have argued, on the other hand (and particularly against the last two categories), that the narrative should be classed primarily as story or saga, written (or recited) for the purpose of serious entertainment. It cannot be dated with any certainty and the widely accepted guess that it belongs to the Solomonic period has too often unduly dominated the interpretation of the story.

2. "Succession" is not its major interest, as Rost and others have claimed. Neither is Rost's definition of its boundaries satisfactory: these should include at least the bulk of 2 Sam 2-4 (2:8 or 12-4:12 or 5:3) together with most of 9-20 and 1 Kgs 1-2.

3. The resultant story is a coherent one of accession, rebellion and succession. The theme of giving and grasping is central, providing a key to David's fortunes. Over against the king who is content to allow the kingdom to be the gift of others (both initially and in the flight from Jerusalem) is set the king who is willing to use violence to seize the wife of Uriah. The grasping expressed in this pivotal episode is worked out at both political and private levels for David in the events that follow, culminating in the Solomonic coup, an affair of some ambivalence but essentially an act of seizure.

The author offers us a complex vision of life that is often comic and ironic in its presentation of contrasting perspectives and conflicting norms. His acute awareness of the frailty of man is at the same time a sympathetic one; in particular, his presentation of David, despite the bleakness of the final scenes, is of a fundamentally engaging character. The vision as a whole is neither propagandist nor didactic but artistic.

4. The narrative, moreover, has a markedly traditional character. Through an analysis of narrative patterns of stereotypes and motifs I have shown that the story belongs to a tradition of Israelite story-telling which was most probably originally an oral one and which is exemplified in other parts of Samuel and in Judges. Whether, however, the narrative in its present form is directly a product of oral tradition or whether it embodies originally oral techniques and story material which have in time become part of a written ("literary") tradition must remain an open question.

A P P E N D I X A

(to Chapt. I, para. 4.21)

The "Succession Narrative" as a dramatization of proverbial wisdom (Whybray, 1968 : 78-95)

The weakness of Whybray's argument may be demonstrated by applying it to the patriarchal narratives and those stories in Samuel which he considers not to belong to the "Succession Narrative". The ease with which his "proverbial" themes may be located in this non-"wisdom" material suggests that they cannot properly be employed, at least as Whybray employs them, as criteria for distinguishing "wisdom" or "didactic" literature.

Patience and the control of the temper

Jacob waits twenty years before taking action against Laban; David refuses to attack Saul.

(Lack of) prudent consideration before taking action

Shechem, the son of Hamar, rashly has intercourse with Dinah; Saul acts precipitately at Gilgal.

The ability (or lack of it) to learn from experience

Jacob's twenty years of waiting may also be an illustration of this theme (in its negative form); on the other hand, once he does learn he is the master of deception; David rapidly learns from bitter experience to suspect Saul's expressions of friendship.

Humility versus pride and ambition

(Also of central importance for Hermisson, 138-41, quoting Prov 16:18). Jacob humbles himself before Esau; the fall of Goliath.

Control of sexual passion

Shechem again; Abner and Rizpah (Whybray considers 2 Sam 3 as lying outside the "Narrative").

The use of speech

(Also Hermisson, 141-3). The point is the ability to speak the right words at the right time: Jacob securing the blessing of Isaac, or mollifying the anger of both Laban and Esau; David persuading Ahimelech to give him bread and a weapon, or convincing Achish of his loyalty.

The education of children

I.e. failure to exercise proper discipline over one's children: Jacob and his sons in Gen 34; Eli and his sons.

Ambition

(Prov 27:20: "never satisfied are the eyes of man"). Laban refuses to be satisfied with the gains he has made from Jacob but has to have more; Sarah's ambition for her son Isaac (Gen 21), and Rebecca's for Jacob (Gen 27); Saul's ambition for Jonathan to be king; David's ambition to gain the hand of the king's daughter.

Frustration and fulfilment

(Prov 13:12). The dashing of Esau's expectation of the blessing; the joy of Abraham's servant at the success of his mission to Laban (Gen 24); Saul's frustration to the point of madness over David's success and survival.

Friendship, loyalty and treachery

(Also Hermisson, 144-5). Abram and Pharaoh, Abraham and Abimelech, Isaac and Abimelech, Jacob and Esau, the sons of Jacob and the men of Shechem, etc; David and Saul, David and Jonathan; Doeg and the priests of Nob, Amner and Ishbosheth, etc.

Revenge

"Absalom's fatal act of revenge for the rape of Tamar was not in accordance with the prudent counsel of the wisdom teachers [Prov 20:22] who believed that retribution for misdeeds would come of its own accord" (95). No more in accordance with such prudent counsel was the revenge of the sons of Jacob on the men of Shechem; on the other hand, Esau's decision not to take revenge may illustrate the positive application of the teaching; similarly David refuses to revenge himself for the wrongs done by Saul, and in 1 Sam 25 is persuaded to let retribution come upon Nabal of its own accord.

Retribution (pp.60-2, 80)

(Prov 13:21: "Misfortune pursues sinners, but prosperity rewards the righteous"). This scheme is usually seen as occurring through "natural" processes and often with poetic justice (Prov 21:7a, 26:27). So Jacob who cheats Esau out of his birthright is in turn tricked by Laban; Shechem's relationship with Dinah begins and ends with violence.

Yahweh as the controller of human destiny (pp.62-6,80)

(Prov 15:3, 16:9, 19:21). As Crenshaw comments (138-9): "The hidden control of God over human affairs despite man's intentions is a basic assumption of the Yahwist, Elohist, deuteronomist, and prophecy". This is particularly noticeable in the bulk of the Yahwist's narrative where events are allowed to take their own course and "the destiny of the characters [is] seen to be working itself out naturally" (Whybray's comment on the "Succession Narrative"): e.g. in the story of Abram in Egypt God only appears as the real power behind the natural phenomenon (the plague) that prompted Pharaoh's reversal of the whole situation (cf. Yahweh striking dead the illegitimate child in 2 Sam 12) or "ordaining" that Absalom accept the wrong counsel. The theme is also prominent in the stories of the early David and the house of Saul.

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A P P E N D I X B

(to Chapt. II, para. 6.22,
6.32 and 6.41)

I. Inclusio and chiasmus in 2 Sam 2-4

2 Sam 2:19 { And Asahel pursued (after) Abner.
... (death of As; note play on >hr)
24 { And Joab and Asahel pursued (after) Abner.

2:23/4 { And all who came to the place ... stopped
(took up a stand; c̣md); and Joab and
Asahel pursued Abner.
... (confrontation between J. and Ab)
And all the army stopped (c̣md); and they
28 { pursued Israel no more, nor did they fight any more.

2:29 { And Abner and his men went (hlk) by the
Arabah all that night; they crossed the
Jordan and went (hlk) all the forenoon,
and came to Mahanaim (i.e. destination).
... (details of aftermath of battle)
32 { And Joab and his men went (hlk) all night,
and daybreak for them was at Hebron (destination).

2 Sam 3:8 Am I a dog's head in Judah? (i.e. oath?)
(noted { Today I am showing loyalty to Saul's house ...
also by { and have not given you into the hand of David;
König, 300) { yet you charge me with a fault concerning
a woman today.
+ oath (vs. 9)

3:12 { To whom(does) the land (belong)?
Make your covenant with me (>ty);
and behold my hand is with you (c̣mk),
to bring over to you all Israel.

3:24-5 { What have you done? (mh c̣syth)
... (accusation about Abner: he came to
spy and to know)
what you are doing. (>t kl >šr >th c̣šh)

32-4 They buried Abner at Hebron; and the king lifted up his voice and wept at the grave of Abner:

{ And all the people wept;
... (David's lament)
And all the people wept over him again.

2 Sam 4:8 { Behold the head of Ishbosheth (a), son of Saul (b),
your (c) enemy, who sought your (c) life;
but Yahweh (d) has granted
my lord the king (c) vengeance this day
on Saul (b) and on his seed (a).

4:9-11 (The first and last segments pose a somewhat ironic contrast).

As Yahweh lives, who has redeemed my life
from every adversity,

{ (a) When one told me, "Behold Saul is dead,"
(b) and he was as one bringing (good?) news
(msrh) in his eyes,
(a) I seized him and slew him (hrg) in Ziklag,
(b) which was my reward/news (bsrh) for him;
(a) How much more, when evil men have slain
(hrg) a righteous man in his own house upon
his bed.

And now, shall I not seek his blood from your
hands and destroy you from the earth.

II. Vocabulary : 2 Sam 2-4 and the "Succession Narrative"

The following items from the vocabulary stock of 2 Sam 2-4 appear to have a particular affinity with that of the "Succession Narrative" as it is conventionally defined (2 Sam 9-20 + 1 Kgs 1-2).

ymyn ("right") + sm>1 ("left"). In Sam: 1 Sam 6:12
(Deut. Hist.), 2 Sam 2:19,21, 16:6.

hrrwh ("last"). In Sam: 1 Sam 29:2, 2 Sam 2:26, 19:12.13, 23:1.
Not in Jud; in Kgs only 1 Kgs 17:13.

špr ("trumpet"). In Sam: 1 Sam 13:3, 2 Sam 2:28, 6:15, 15:10,
18:16, 20:1,22 (and cf. 1 Kgs 1:34, 39, 41).

tqc ("blow" e.g. a trumpet). In Sam: 1 Sam 13:3, 2 Sam 2:28,
18:16, 20:1,22 (and cf. 1 Kgs 1:34,39).

srbwt ("steppes"). In Sam: 1 Sam 23:24, 2 Sam 2:29, 4:7,
15:28 (Q), 17:16.

qbr ("tomb"). In Sam: 2 Sam 2:32, 3:32, 4:12, 17:23, 19:38,
21:14.

dl ("weak"). In prose narrative: Jud 6:15, 2 Sam 3:1, 13:4.

Occurs mostly in poetry (e.g. 14 times in Prov).

klb ("dog"). Used of person, in Sam: 1 Sam 24:15, 2 Sam 3:8
9:8, 16:9.

hz ("grasp"). In Sam: 2 Sam 1:9, 2:21, 4:10, 6:6, 20:9
 (and cf. 1 Kgs 1:51).

hms ("belly"?). In OT: 2 Sam 2:23, 3:27, 4:6, 20:10.

ngy ("innocent"). In Sam: 1 Sam 19:5, 2 Sam 3:28, 14:9.

nbl ("foolish"). In Sam: 2 Sam 3:33, 13:13. Occurs mostly in
 poetry. Cf. nblh ("folly"); in Sam: 1 Sam 25:25,
 2 Sam 13:12.

brh ("eat"). In OT: qal: 2 Sam 12:17, 13:6,10; piel: Lam 4:10;
 hiph.: 2 Sam 3:35, 13:5.

t'm (to "taste", "perceive"). In OT: 1 Sam 14:24,29,43,43,
2 Sam 3:35, 19:36, Prov 31:18, Job 12:11, 34:3, Jon 3:7.

m'hry kn ("afterwards"?). In OT: 2 Sam 3:28, 15:1,
 2 Chron 32:23.

šlm (piel: "pay, requite, reward"). In Jud-Kgs: Jud 1:7,
 1 Sam 24:20, 2 Sam 3:39, 12:6, 15:7, 1 Kgs 9:25,
 2 Kgs 4:7, 9:26.

rph (vb. or adj.: "be weak", "weak"). In Sam: 2 Sam 4:1, 17:2.
 Not in Jud or Kgs. Mostly in poetry.

šmw'h ("news"). In Sam: 1 Sam 2:24, 4:19, 2 Sam 4:4, 13:30
 (and cf. 1 Kgs 2:28). Not in Gen-Jud. Mostly in poetry.

mškb ("bed"). In prose narrative: Exod 7:28, 2 Sam 4:5,7,11,
11:2,13, 13:5, 17:28, 1 Kgs 1:47, 2 Kgs 6:12, 2 Chron 16:14.

hdr ("chamber"). In Sam: 2 Sam 4:7, 13:10,10 (and cf. 1 Kgs 1:15)

swr rš ("behead"). In OT: 1 Sam 17:46, 2 Sam 4:7, 16:9.

pdh npš ("redeem one's life"). In OT: 2 Sam 4:9, 1 Kgs 1:29,

Job 33:28, Pss 55:19, 71:23, 49:16, 34:23. Note the exact phrase in 2 Sam 4:9 and 1 Kgs 1:29 ("As Yahweh lives, who has redeemed my life from every adversity"), peculiar to these two passages.

mgvd (hiph. part. of ngd). In OT: Gen 41:24, Jud 14:19, 2 Sam 1:5,6,13, 4:10, 15:13, 18:11 + Est, Pss, 2 Isa, Jer, Amos, Zec.

bšr ("bear tidings"). In Sam: 1 Sam 4:17, 31:9, 2 Sam 1:20 (poem) 4:10, 18:19,20,20,26, (and cf. 1 Kgs 1:42).

Not in Gen-Jud, nor elsewhere in Kgs.

bšwrh ("tidings", "reward for news" ??). In OT: 2 Sam 4:10, 18:20,22,25,27, 2 Kgs 7:9.

šdyq ("righteous"). In Sam: 1 Sam 24:18, 2 Sam 4:11, 23:3 (poem), (and cf. 1 Kgs 2:32). Not in Jos-Jud. Mostly in poetry.

tlh ("hang"). In Sam: 2 Sam 4:12, 18:10, 21:22,

Not in Jud or Kgs.

A P P E N D I X C

(to Chapt. IV, para. 2.2)

The "Battle Report" : oral or scribal convention?

1. Recently in a study of the conquest of the kingdoms of Sihon and Og (in Numbers, Deuteronomy and Judges), John Van Seters has stressed the need to consider the possibility of a strictly literary relationship between narratives that show marked similarity though not identity. It is in line with this emphasis that when he looks at the "form" of the various accounts of the battle with Sihon he opts for its genesis or setting in literary or scribal/annalistic convention rather than in oral tradition; in support he offers some views on the nature of oral tradition and adduces some interesting comparative evidence from ancient near eastern annals (186-9). I would argue, however, that his treatment of the relevant evidence is inadequate, essentially an oversimplification of the issues involved, and cannot be regarded as conclusive.

I

2. The basis of Van Seters' argument is Richter's delineation (1966a:162-6) of the "battle report," already noted above (Chapt. IV, para 2.1). Compare with this scheme the following accounts from the story of Sihon (the bracketed numbers refer to the appropriate elements in Richter's analysis):

Num 21:23-4

- (2) He gathered (wy'sp) all his army together,
- (1) and went out against (wys' lqr't) Israel ... and came to Jahaz,
- (2) and joined battle (wylhm) with Israel.
- (3) And Israel defeated him (wykhw) ...
- (4?) and took possession of his land ...

Judg 11:20-2

- (2) And S. gathered all his army together,
- (2) and encamped (wyh'nw) at Jahaz, and joined battle with Israel.
- (3) And the Lord ... gave S.... into the hand of Israel, and they defeated him.
- (4?) So Israel took possession of his land ...

To this extent, then, the passages may be said to fit the form (or vice versa).

2.1 What, Van Seters asks, is its Sitz im Leben? Richter gives no certain answer but Plöger (16-9), whose discussion depends more heavily on material from Deuteronomy and Joshua, sees the whole schema as arising out of a setting in the ancient amphictyonic institution of the Holy War. Van Seters, rightly, is unimpressed by the imprecision of this suggestion. He points out that it is hardly a cultic form used, say, as a preparation for battle, but a "recording" convention.

2.11 Dismissing the possibility that the form has a connection with the narrative conventions of an oral tradition he turns to "a corresponding body of material much closer to hand which has been ignored in this discussion of form. These are the victory inscriptions of the Assyrian kings so common down to the end of the Assyrian empire. While these accounts are much more elaborate and verbose than the biblical counterparts, they are not essentially different in form. In describing a campaign, they usually contain all the basic elements outlined in Richter's form." It is, therefore, "a scribal convention of recording military campaigns which was evidently widespread in the Near East, certainly during the late monarchy and exilic periodsⁱⁿ which the deuteronomistic literature was written."

II

3. Allowing for the moment the starting point of the argument, viz. Richter's identification of an OT "form", let us look first at the argument against a setting in oral tradition (187-8): "Now in a pre-literary society such 'records' or accounts of battles would be handed on by bards or the like. But does Plöger think that this prose formula is really appropriate to the songs of the bards? If the Iliad is an example of such a song or songs, then we are in quite a different world with this form". In further illustration of this point he argues that the "uniformity of style" between the Old Testament Kampfberichte and the battle reports of the Assyrian inscriptions, where there are rarely details of the actual course of the battle, "would appear even greater if it were contrasted with the heroic style in which the contest of battle, the struggle, is the essential element."

3.1 This argument gains its impetus simply by presenting what is a false dichotomy.

3.11 First, it is clearly prejudicial, when discussing a "prose formula", to talk of the world of oral tradition in terms only of "bards" and "songs". Van Seters refers (187) to the work of Lord (1960), and, to be sure, the Parry Collection of oral traditional texts which has formed the basis of Lord's work is concerned with a sung, poetic tradition (Parry and Lord, 1954). Yet there is no lack of oral narrative traditions where the standard format is prose, where the traditionist is not a singer but a teller of tales (Chadwick, passim), and there is little reason to doubt that such a tradition, or traditions, once existed in Israel.

3.12 Nor is the use of the term "bard" altogether helpful. It may too easily inhibit a proper consideration of the manifold possible sources of orally transmitted narrative traditions. While the images of, say, the debonair court minstrel or the blind wanderer singing by the campfire have their appeal, they hardly exhaust the possibilities, as even the most cursory survey of comparative evidence will show. These can range through all classes of society and include not only the lay as well as the professional narrator but a wide variety of professional traditionists (Chadwick, III/876-903). In some cases, moreover, it is exceedingly difficult to distinguish clearly between the "oral" and the "literary" functions of the traditionist concerned. Such appears to be the case, for example, with the ancient Irish fili, "who, as well as being a learned poet, master of senchus (history) and dinnshenchus (placelore), had been trained to narrate the chief stories of Ireland to kings, lords and noblemen" (Murphy, 1966:102-3; cf. Murphy, 1953:191-2). Such a one operated in a society that was certainly not "pre-literary", yet where oral traditions of an historical kind were valued and where the traditionist stood close to the bureaucratic centre of the society. He was, indeed, a meeting point for oral tradition and "written" literature.

In other words, the depiction of oral tradition as simply the province of the "bard" of the "pre-literate" society is quite arbitrary.

3.13. Equally arbitrary is the implication that the particular elaborated, heroic style of the Iliad is an indispensable indicator of oral traditional narrative. Certainly an heroic ethos is a

commonplace of oral tradition the world over. On the other hand, it is no more a sine qua non than any other kind of ethos, and, furthermore, there are variations of the heroic just as there are of the non-heroic. The term is a useful classificatory norm but should not be allowed to obscure the variety of narrative that finds expression in oral tradition /1/.

Given distinctive elements in Israelite religion and culture it would not be surprising to find some of these acting as determinative factors in the shaping of the subject matter and ethos of such verbal art forms as may have existed in the society from time to time. A particular feeling for the exclusive sovereignty of Yahweh, for example, might not only have proved inimical to elements of mythological and magical machinery that are commonplace in some traditions but might well also have had repercussions on such a notion as the all-sufficient "hero" and on the degree to which the role of the individual's physical prowess played in the gaining of a victory was considered to be a fit subject for elaboration /2/.

3.131 Of course, as far as relative elaboration is concerned the terseness of much OT narrative generally, as well as in connection with battle accounts in particular, has frequently been observed and various explanations sought /3/. Certainly this is underlined in a comparison with the Iliad. Yet whether this reflects anything more than, say, differences in taste or in the relative skill of the individuals whose narrative happens to have been preserved, is a moot point. Also worthy of consideration is the possibility that in some cases the stories concerned were deliberately truncated or contracted, perhaps along standard lines already available in the oral tradition itself (if, indeed, they were once part of an oral tradition), for purposes of recording /4/.

4. So much, then, for the arguments against the possibility of an oral traditional origin for the "form". But if these are less than compelling there still remains to be considered the positive implications of the Mesopotamian evidence.

4.1 Allowing Van Seters' demonstration of affinities between the annalistic convention and the OT "form", as delimited by Richter, we are clearly face to face with a certain coincidence if we are to maintain the possibility that Richter's Kampfbericht echoes an originally oral traditional pattern. Yet it does not appear to be a coincidence that is difficult to accept. Van Seters says himself of the comparison (188), that "these accounts are much more elaborate and verbose than the biblical

counterparts ...". Moreover, though it may be true that "they usually contain all the basic elements outlined in Richter's form", it is also the case that the connection remains a very loose one. When particular passages are compared it is immediately obvious that there is a great deal usually that remains unparallelled, while the parallels in question are essentially simple and abstract, not, in fact, far removed from what might be expected in any report of a battle or campaign. In this respect, then, a certain formalizing along such lines is not remarkable in a narrative setting, whether it be a scibal/annalistic one in Assyria, say, or an oral traditional one, perhaps, in Israel.

4.2 It remains a question to what extent there exist more precise, and hence significant, parallels between the two bodies of material. From a preliminary examination I would suggest, for a start, that there is significantly more coherence within the separate bodies of text than between them, though the demonstration of this is beyond the scope of this short study /5/. One of the real difficulties here is that Richter's discussion of the OT form is itself a somewhat deficient base on which to rest a comparison. It is much too generalized, lacking in scope and precise attention to the circumstances of particular passages, to provide anything but the loosest indication of a possible OT stereotype. Obviously the looser the definition, the easier it is to find parallels in the ancient near eastern accounts /6/.

III

5. On these grounds, therefore, I would contend that the basic issues remain live ones. Is there a recognisable OT form - the "battle report"? Are there several such forms? And is it, or are they, to be associated primarily with oral or scribal tradition, or might it be a matter, perhaps of both?

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NOTES - CHAPTER I

1. Some of the points Whybray develops are made by Eissfeldt, 1965:140-1; see also Luther, 194-9, and Jacob, 29-30.
2. Brueggemann's recent explorations of the theological dimensions of the narrative are interesting and valuable (see esp. 1972ac, 1974) but in my view they exaggerate both the coherence and sophistication of this perspective as well as its significance for the story as a whole. In fact the analysis (like that of von Rad, 1966) concentrates on only a small proportion of the total material, in particular the three passages central to von Rad's interpretation, viz. 11:27, 12:24 and 17:14, together with David's response to the death of the child of adultery (12:15-23), and David in the flight from Jerusalem (esp. 15:25-6, 16:11-2). (On von Rad see also below, Chapt.III, n.9). Ridout's claim (esp. Chapt. V, "Theology and Rhetoric", and p.220) that the "major thrust" of the narrative is theological depends heavily upon the inclusion of 2 Sam 7, as a whole, within its boundaries - an inclusion I cannot accept (see below, Chapt.II, para. 2.1-2.111)
3. Eissfeldt (1965:140-1) is a notable exception - he rightly observes that there is nothing certain about the dating and suggests, tentatively, a ninth century date (see also McKane, 1963:19-21). Note also Wagner's recent words of caution over the tenth century date (136): "All along, not enough attention has been paid to the question of dating the Court History". Hölischer's ninth century date (see e.g. 77ff., 98) is dependent on his analysis of the material as part of a "J" source, concluding with 1 Kgs 12. Similarly Carlson's late dating is bound up with his thesis of an exilic "D-work" of which the narrative is a unified part, though having passed through an oral pre-Deuteronomic stage. Here I follow the consensus in finding neither thesis particularly satisfactory.
4. Eissfeldt's own suggestion, that 2 Sam 20:14 (LXX) may point to a mid ninth century date, is quite uncertain, as he himself admits.
5. In a similar vein is von Rad's argument for eyewitness authority (1966:195): "[The author] must have been one who had an intimate knowledge of what went on at court. His portrayal of personalities and events breathes an atmosphere which must silence any doubts as to the reliability of his account." Cf. Pfeiffer, 1952:356-7.
6. See also Eissfeldt (1965:140-1), though he is more reserved in his criticism: "This argument must be limited to the point that an eyewitness account underlies it."
7. One important point concerns the use of the terminology "the men of Judah" and "the men of Israel", another the significance of the Sheba episode (cf. Wellhausen, 1878:227-8; Kittel, 47).
8. See e.g. Wolff (1966:133-4) and the critique by Wagner (120-1); cf. also Winnett (3-5) and the recent study by Schulte (following Hölischer but with important differences) which re-opens the question in a radical way.

9. This is a decisive argument for Rost: referring above all to the role of David in the Bathsheba episode he claims (233) that "Es ist kaum anzunehmen, dass ein späterer es gewagt hätte, David ohne Grund in dieser Weise blosszustellen". See further the criticisms of Carlson (136-9); but his own attempt to identify the "ideological tendency" of the material with the Deuteronomic school is somewhat forced and has received little support (cf. Fohrer, 1970:222).
10. This is not to deny the value of an understanding of the historical and social setting of a piece of literature, where that can be ascertained; though I should wish to re-assert, against the customary pre-occupation in OT studies with "life-settings" the notion of the autonomy of the work of art. This has been discussed recently in a paper delivered orally to the IOSOT in Edinburgh (19 August 1974) by Prof. L. Alonso-Schökel, entitled "Hermeneutic Problems of a Literary Approach to the Old Testament."
11. In seeking textual support for this interpretation Whybray places much weight upon the remarks of Benaiah, complimentary to Solomon, in 1 Kgs 1:37 (see 51-2; cf. Rost, 234); this depends on the large assumption that Benaiah is the author's mouthpiece. On the author's stance see further, below, Chapt. III.
12. It is interesting to note e.g. the impact of Delekat's paper on Brueggemann's interpretation of the narrative. David is "fully man", fully free and responsible, and the narrative is little concerned to dwell on the negative side of David (1969:487, 498); the David who suffers Joab's rebuke (2 Sam 19:1-8) is presented as "a man, indeed a king, feeling the freedom of his manhood He was as much as possible one who accepted responsibility, who celebrated freedom, who asserted authority, who risked decision" (1972a:8). But where reference to Delekat first appears in Brueggemann's essays (1972b) we find that "David is the deathbringer, who in his self-seeking, calls down upon his people and his family death" (108, cf. also 106 on 2 Sam 19:1-8).
13. Note Voegelin's description (265-6) of David as a "charismatic brute": Auzou (43), of David: "Il provoque l'affection"; and even with his weakness, "Il fut jamais médiocre".
14. Cf. Eissfeldt's similar comment (1948:25-6) when comparing von Rad's assessment of the tendenz of the narrative (the legitimation of Solomon) with that of Hölischer who saw 1 Kgs 1 and 2 as essentially hostile to Solomon and marking the beginning of decline, an intimation of the disaster (the division of the kingdom) to come.
15. Cf. e.g. the well known case of Jean Anouilh's play, Antigone, which first appeared in France during the German occupation and served as a rallying point for many Frenchmen "who could see their own struggle reflected in the conflict between the uncompromising attitude of Antigone with the spirit of freedom, and Créon with the Vichy government" (Pronko, xvii); others, however, maintained that the author was on Créon's side (hence permission for the play to be produced). There remains some doubt, however, that Anouilh intended his play to have the political meaning that was found in it.

16. Thus von Rad (1966:195) notes, regarding the author's interpretational standpoint, "the immense restraint which this writer practises". McKane (1963:275) observes: "A noteworthy feature of the History of Succession is the impression of objectivity which it gives. It is not tendentious, nor does it strive to enlist the sympathy of the reader for one side or the other" (see also 32).
17. In Chaps. II (para 7-7.42) and III below I shall further argue that "succession" has been greatly over-rated as a primary theme of the story. This is also suggested by Jackson (185-6, 194).
18. In effect I am merely employing here against the characterization of the literature as political propaganda (and the same would apply to the "didactic" category) the same argument Whybray (1968:50) uses against those who see the work as a moral tract (e.g. M. Smith): "[Such views] ... do not do justice to the author's subtle understanding of human nature or his literary skill. Simple moral or religious exhortation does not conceal itself behind psychological complexities: to be effective, it must present its message in terms of black and white and point its moral explicitly."
19. It sometimes seems to be forgotten that, in terms of the available evidence, this must remain merely an attractive but highly speculative hypothesis, unless new archaeological discoveries (relating say to the Israelite court or to scribal schools) change its status. I note now in similar vein Whybray's recent study (1974) casting doubt on the use of *hākām* as a designation of a professional class of royal counsellors (cf. 31,54) and making a fair assessment of the evidence on the existence of schools in ancient Israel (32-43).
20. Hermisson's argument, that the narrative is not a textbook (*Lehrbuch*) but history writing (*Geschichtsschreibung*) or exposition (*Geschichtsdarstellung*) in the context of "wisdom" thought (*im weisheitlichen Horizont*), is no less open to Crenshaw's basic criticism than Whybray's argument, as Brueggemann (who largely adopts the "wisdom" view) as much as admits (1974:182).

Since completing the final draft of this dissertation Whybray's most recent study (1974) has come to hand. He briefly alludes to Crenshaw's article but does little to meet his basic criticism (which he indirectly acknowledges at several points in the book; e.g. 3,72) - he merely argues (89-90) that most of the "representatives" of wisdom (i.e. those who are called "wise" - by his own argument not a technical term) play more important roles than Crenshaw will allow. But that they are more than the "minor" characters that Crenshaw suggests is very doubtful (cf. Jonadab or the woman of Tekoa, both called "wise", with David, Joab or Absalom). As for Whybray's attempt to designate the work as belonging to the "wisdom" tradition by a word study, the net result for the "Succession Narrative" is that apart from the occurrence of *hkm* (8 times), taken to be a characteristic term of the "intellectual tradition" (but by no means exclusive to the so-called "wisdom" literature, and certainly, as Whybray owns (5), "no infallible guide" to the designation of such literature), the only other relevant terms are from his category 2, especially *bīn* and *cēšā*, words in this category being, according to Whybray (150) of little value for the purpose in hand "in view of their wide dissemination in various traditions of the Old Testament". Thus I can see here no reason to change my negative verdict regarding the argument in Whybray's earlier book.

21. Here I find myself in agreement with Whybray (1974:3n.5), though I should hardly have based my criticism, as he does, on the claim that the definition is too narrow.
22. E.g. von Rad (1962:I/418): wisdom is "practical knowledge of the laws of life and of the world, based on experience"; Scott (1971:22): "a way of thinking/and speaking, with a distinctive vocabulary and literary forms. It sought, in the first place, to provide guidance for living by propounding rules of moral order and, in the second place to explore the meaning of life through reflection, speculation and debate. It was a striving for a structure of order, meaning, and value through cultivation of the mind and conscience"; Whybray (1968:4): "Among its characteristics was a pragmatic and rational outlook. The wisdom of the scribes was an activity pursued independently of religious institutions, which exhibited a detached curiosity about the natural world and about human nature" (cf. now, 1974:1-3, 69-72: those interested in this tradition "concerned themselves more than the majority of their contemporaries in an intellectual way with the problems of human life" (70)); Brueggemann (1972b:97): "a world view and a model for manhood Specifically, the shift from a theocentric to an anthropocentric world view"
23. I.e. meant to instruct, having the manner of a teacher. Whybray entitles section IIIB, "The Succession Narrative as Didactic Literature."
24. Moreover, I suspect that the same would be true if one were to choose a work, say, of Sophocles, Shakespeare or Dickens as one's testing ground.
25. Appeal to irony to account for the negative statement of a theme is allowed by Whybray's method; cf. e.g. 85(d); also 1974:90-1.
26. Note how he acts unseen, through "natural means," just as he does according to Whybray (and cf. von Rad, 1966) in the "Succession Narrative" (see 1968:62-6). If it be objected that nevertheless the consequences of Abram's action were not disastrous as in the pertinent "Succession Narrative" examples (but this is only one type of situation allowed under the definition) we must ask whether it is so obvious that the consequences of David's adultery with Bathsheba were totally disastrous. Whybray's political propagandist would have to answer "not disastrous at all", since David gained a wife who bore the son who was to be the legitimate heir to the throne (which is what is required to be proved).
27. Crenshaw (139 n.41) notes that Nathan's oracle is "one great exception to Whybray's thesis about special revelation, as he himself admits (p.69)."
28. The most similarity he can suggest (101-2) is that both concern a king, have the court for a setting (or at least this is the "normal" setting for the Egyptian genre) and sometimes the Egyptian texts give an account of the quelling of a rebellion.
29. In support of the claim that Sinuhe is greatly influenced by didactic wisdom literature he cites (103 n.32; 104 n.42) Peet, 40-1. But although Peet does indeed claim (41) that Sinuhe is "the complete fusion of the two genres [didactic literature and the short story] in a clever but artificial psychological story," he offers no supporting evidence whatsoever for this claim and neither in his preceding discussion nor anywhere else in the book (he has a separate section for "Wisdom Literature" - Sinuhe is never mentioned in this connection) does he

treat the narrative as anything other than the kind of short story which on p.27 he characterizes as "told for [its] own sake", "pure pastime, not propagandistic or aetiological in origin," "told ... for the pure joy of story-telling". Lefebvre (VII) terms the story "histoire romancée" or "roman"; Harris (232) describes it as "a novel" and lists "adventure, psychology, and sentiment" as its most characteristic ingredients.

30. This claim that Sinuhe is a work of political propaganda appears to be based (a) on Posener's study (see esp. 87-115) of the story against its (claimed) political and social background, and (b) on the brief restatement by Aldred (112-20) which takes the argument a step further than Posener (though without adducing any further evidence). Posener himself is careful to qualify the extent of the link he sees between the story ("roman") and royal politics (115): "La peinture que fait le roman de la situation détendue et heureuse, à la fin du regne de Sésostriis I^{er}, est toute à l'avantage de ce roi. Malgré cela, et bien que l'auteur consacre beaucoup de place à la personne du pharaon, on ne peut dire qu'il s'agit, à proprement parler, d'une oeuvre de propaganda politique". For a firmly negative response to the political propaganda suggestion see also Harris (232).
31. Note especially the emphasis of Luther who saw this material primarily in terms of the "Novelle" and was accordingly cautious about its value as an historical source (198-9). Caspari (1909: esp. 325-48), in qualification of Luther, argued that the material has the style and character of a "Novelle" but deals with real historical events: it thus embodies the transition from "Novelle" to "Geschichtsschreibung." Gressmann (152-96; cf. esp. 166, 183-4, 195-6) also characterized the material as "novellistisch," howbeit, in the case of 2 Sam 15-20 at least, an "historische" rather than "literarische" (i.e. purely fictional) "Novelle." Among more recent commentators note especially Jackson: although he accepts, with reservation, the characterization "historiography" his account of the narrative is primarily in terms of categories such as character, suspense, major and minor themes, scene and plot. Gray (1970:17-22) rightly, in my view, finds in this material "the substance of the novel" and also the style and "dramatic technicalities" of the "professional story-teller" or "narrative artist"; indeed he is prepared to recognize "dramatic interest" as the predominant compositional principle; but despite this he is unwilling to accept "mere entertainment" as the major purpose of the work and defines this in terms of historical (and following Whybray) political and didactic categories.
32. The extent of this in the "Succession Narrative" should not be exaggerated, as Flanagan's recent article serves to illustrate, whatever one's assessment of his argument overall (see below, Chapt. II, n.20). Note the earlier treatment of this material as compounded of several self-contained narratives: especially Gressmann, and Caspari, 1909:317-25, 332-3; 1926. See also Eissfeldt, 1965:139,270-1, and McKane, 1963:20-1.
33. Von Rad (1966:192) specifically defines the "Succession Narrative" as "history writing" as opposed to "saga" - but only after having quite arbitrarily limited the latter term to one particular variety of (cult-orientated) story in Judges.

34. Cf. 647: "It may be observed that [the Icelandic sagas] also contain large imaginative elements, which it is impossible to control, except where external evidence is to be found."
35. Scholes and Kellogg discuss the term "traditional" in the pages following. For discussion of the term "saga" as it has been used in OT studies see Gunkel, 1931 ; Koch, 1969:148-58; von Rad, 1972:31-7; and note now the article by Gibert.
36. Bentzen (I/243; see also 244-5) argues that this story of David and his sons "may well have begun as orally delivered tale". Note also Schulz's stylistic analysis (1923) which illustrates not only how similar is the narrative technique of the "Succession Narrative" to that of other parts of Samuel, but also how readily it may be related to Olrik's conventions ("laws") of oral (folk) narrative composition.
37. Jackson is not happy with a sharp distinction between the "Succession Narrative" and stories "just the other side of the 'borderline' between legend and history" (184); he refers to Judges 3 and 4 and cites the important study by Alonso-Schökel. See also Bentzen, I/243-51; Gray, 1970:17-8,86; Schulz, 1923.
38. Indeed Whybray himself admits (115) that "the Succession Narrative stands firmly in the line of development of the Israelite narrative tradition." Note also Schulte's recent study: one of his aims is to show that "der Mutterboden israelitischer Geschichtsschreibung [he includes the "Succession Narrative" in a loose definition of this term; cf. e.g. 219] nicht die Hofchronik ist, sondern die volkstümliche Erzählung." In this respect at least it seems to me that his study is largely successful.
39. I.e. a piece of narrative, tale of any length, told or written in prose or verse, of actual or fictitious events, legend, myth, anecdote, novel, romance (cf. The Concise Oxford Dictionary, 4 edn. 1951). On "narrative" and "story" see the interesting discussion by Wellek and Warren (212-25): "The Nature and Modes of Narrative Fiction". There is much that is pertinent here irrespective of whether the term "fiction" is considered appropriate in the present context.
40. While I shall discuss the question of composition again in Chapt. IV below, I do not propose to speculate further concerning date or precise provenance.

NOTES - CHAPTER II

1. Notable exceptions are Gressmann, and Caspari, 1909:1926. Otherwise the only major disagreements over the material within these boundaries concern 2 Sam 10-12 and 1 Kgs 2;(a) some scholars take 10:1-11:1 + 12:2-31, or some part thereof, as a separate (annalistic) source incorporated into the work to provide a framework for the Bathsheba episode, and there is also disagreement over the originality of the Nathan oracle in chapt. 12; (b) apart from a widely recognized Deuteronomic addition in 1 Kgs 2:2b-4, 27, and the annalistic note in vss. 10-11, a variety of other interpolations in 1 Kgs 2 has been postulated. See further Rost, 184-9 and 193-200; Carlson, 144-62; Noth, 1968:8-13; Gray, 1970:15-6; Whybray (1968:8-9) gives a brief summary.
2. Against this view: Hölischer, 288 (he adds 1 Kgs 3:4a, 16-8 + 12:1, 3b-14, 18-9); and Mowinckel, 11-4 (he takes 1 Kgs 1-2 as the beginning of a Solomon saga).
3. See also Hempel, 30; Hertzberg, 297, 299, 376; Rendtorff, 429, 432, 437-9; Richter, 1966a:264. Cf. earlier, H. Smith, xxvi and 267-8; Budde, 1902:xvi; Nowack, xvii-xxiii; Pfeiffer, 1952:342-59; Caird, 859-60.
4. It is almost universally excluded, even by Vriezen (170,187) who includes almost everything else from 1 Sam 16:14 - 2 Sam 21:15.
5. The link with 2 Sam 6 was earlier suggested, tentatively, by Wellhausen, 1878:222; and cf. Kittel, 46.
6. As Mowinckel (10) is not slow to observe. See the recent criticisms by Schulte (138-9) and on chapt.6, Carlson (92-6) with further literature cited there. For acceptance of Rost's suggestion see e.g. von Rad, 1966:176-7; Noth, 1957:62; Weiser, 1962:164; Hertzberg, 376; (?) Auzou, 364; (?) Delekat 26. Jackson (183,186) gives qualified support to the chapt.6 connection but finds little warrant for linking chapt.7. Ridout (see esp. 171-6) ignores chapt.6 but includes the whole of chapt.7.
7. For criticism of his analysis of chapt.7, see Noth, 1955. My own view is close to that of Mowinckel (10-1; so also Bentzen, II/94), without necessarily endorsing the details of his "cultic" argument: the chapter is "an aetiological legend, a typical, theological, learned one;" it is, moreover, largely a literary unit and source analyses such as Rost's lack convincing support in the text.
8. Caird (856) contrasts the "turgid verbosity" of 2 Sam 7 with "the superb narrative prose" of 2 Sam 9-20; similarly Pfeiffer, 1952:341; 1937:308; cf. Bentzen, II/94. In my view, Ridout's undoubted literary tact deserts him at this point in his thesis and a primarily theological or ideological perspective takes over.
9. Indeed the inclusion of material through the same thematic process need not stop with chaps. 6 and 7: Eybers argues (28-30) that "Unity [of most of 1 and 2 Samuel + 1 Kgs 1-2] may also be found in the purpose, if this was to indicate that Solomon was the legitimate king of all Israel, for this does not depend on II Sam 7 only, but also on the very origin of the monarchy, which was instituted by Samuel.

Therefore the relevant history starts with Samuel and reaches a climax near the middle of the book (II Sam 7), followed by a detailed description of how God's promise to David was fulfilled."

10. Ward, discussing chaps. 2-4 as part of a proposed source narrating the story of David's rise (in both 1 and 2 Samuel), observes (140) that it is the finest piece of writing in the whole composition. It is worth noting also that Luther (194-9) puts this material (2:8-3:1, 6-39 + 4:1-12) in the same class of narrative as 2 Sam 13-19 (i.e. "novellistische Geschichtsschreibung")
11. Note the caution shown by Kennedy, 1904:234; Eissfeldt, 1965:277-8; Mauchline, 241-2. Against: Segal, 1918-9: 54-5; Hertzberg, 381.
12. Cf. however Carlson (198-203), though it is not altogether clear whether this is precisely what he is claiming; also Schulte, 139, 166-9; Pfeiffer, 1952:353; Caird, 859; (?) Auzou, 364.
13. It appears to me that Carlson's criticisms (199-200) of Segal (1918-9: 54-5) merely highlight the literary discontinuity of the two stories (21:1-14 and Chapt. 9); in which case questions of "priority" become simple historical ones, irrelevant for our enquiry.
14. No other son of Saul is mentioned, not even when Abner is quarrelling with Ishbosheth; the murder of Ishbosheth in 4:4 implies that, as far as the story is concerned, Mephibosheth is now the last possible contender for the throne (and cf. 2 Sam 16:3 where the same assumption underlies the narrative), and it makes clear that he has been taken into hiding and out of the public (and David's) eye..
15. The following argument was arrived at independently of Segal's studies, which came to my notice only recently, and of Schulte's recent book.
16. This is also discussed by Segal (1964-5: 323 n.5). In my view the author has seen the opportunity to include this piece of (foreshadowing) information following his momentary pause to add the gloss (of his own making) about Beeroth; the transition to Mephibosheth comes through the note of fleeing. Then when he picks up the narrative proper he reintroduces his characters by giving them their full names (vs. 5a, and cf. the end of vs. 2; virtually ring-composition). This passage is generally taken as a gloss or transposition from chapt. 9: see e.g. Wellhausen, 1878:222; H. Smith, 283-5; Budde, 1902:216; Hertzberg, 264.
17. Notice too that the incident mentioned in connection with Abiathar's punishment (1 Kgs 2:26) is also one that is narrated in the larger narrative (reading ʾr̄n, "ark", with MT and not ʾp̄d, "ephod" as suggested by Gray, 1970:108-9). I find quite unconvincing Noth's rather extravagant analysis (1968:8-13; followed by Gray, 1970:16) which takes vss. 26-35, together with 13-25 and 36-46a as secondary, and vss. 5-9 as tertiary, elaborations of the story. Ridout's excision (76-7) of vss. 26-7 on structural grounds has more to commend it.
18. Note that the pattern observed in the "Succession History" by Blenkinsopp (1966:48-9) whereby each major episode contains an important incident involving a woman and an ensuing death (he expresses it in terms of "sin externalised in a sexual form which leads to death"; see further, below, Chapt. IV para. 15-15.4) may be observed here also - the quarrel over the former king's concubine, Rizpah, leads eventually to Ishbosheth's death. We are reminded of the final episode (Solomon's coup) where Abishag, formerly David's concubine, is the catalyst in Adonijah's death.

19. Schulte (166) recognizes the difficulty and suggests that either 2 Sam 5:6-9 belongs to the story (but he rightly doubts this) or one or more episodes are missing from the extant compilation.
20. This "break" provides a starting point for Flanagan's recent argument (1972) that 1 Kgs 1-2 was originally separate from 2 Sam 9-20, which itself contains an originally distinct unit, 2 Sam 11-2. While I accept that Flanagan is right to emphasize once more (so earlier, Luther, Gressmann, Caspari; and cf. Eissfeldt, 1965:139,270) the loosely structured, episodic nature of the narrative, and to stress the fragility of the "succession" theme in 2 Sam 13-20 (so also Blenkinsopp, 1966:47), I do not find his main thesis of a major redaction convincing. My major criticism is that he fails to account for the material in 1 Kgs 2 which forms a direct link with the subject matter and characters of 2 Sam 13-20 (and 2-4, as I argue in this present chapter) and, with the exception of a few verses (esp. vss. 2-4, 10-1, 27), is extremely difficult to distinguish in terms of outlook and style from the rest of the "Succession Narrative" (Whybray, 1968:8-9; against Noth, 1968:8-11).
21. All it would require is something like "And it came to pass when David dwelt in Jerusalem" or "After David had taken Jerusalem".
22. Cf. Flanagan, 1971:50. He links 10:1-5 with 11:1 but still sees this as part of a basic account of the war concluded in 12:26-31 and separate from the Bathsheba story.
23. On the pertinence of the Ammonite cameo in the larger narrative (looking back to chapt 9 as well as forward to 13) see below, Chapt. III, para. 4., 6.
24. According to Schulte, the "David-Saul-story" is found in 1 Sam 16-20; 21-3; 27; 29-30; 2 Sam 1-2:8; 5 (these references are approximate only) though this has undergone a certain development and two stages ("Teile") may be distinguished, particularly in chapt. 16-20. 2:10a, 11; 3:1(?), 2-5, 10, 30; 4:2b, 4 are considered not original to the major narrative of chapt. 2-4 (i.e. from 2:12, the beginning of the "David-Story"); cf. 165-6.
25. Indeed the whole episode comes as something of a surprise after 1 Sam 31 where the implication is that the house of Saul has come to an end (cf. 31:2, 6-7).
26. Most of them belong to larger hypotheses concerning the composition of the narratives in both 1 and 2 Samuel relating to the so-called "story of David's rise" ("Geschichte vom Aufstieg Davids") seen variously as running from 1 Sam 15 or 16 to 2 Sam 5, 7, 8, or even 9. Cf. recently Nöbel; Weiser, 1966; Ward; Grønbaek; and see further the literature cited and the summary of hypotheses in Schicklberger, 255-8.
27. Otherwise in OT: Gen 29:14, Jud 9:2; cf. Gen 2:23, Job 2:5.
28. As e.g. Schulte's "David-Saul-Story". On the other hand there are some signs that 2 Sam 1 may also belong to the "Succession Narrative": cf. e.g. 2 Sam 4:10 and indeed, the general parallel between that scene and this.
29. The note about the 'pwd bd (vs. 14b), whatever this object was, probably belongs originally to the ark story.

30. 1 Chron 15:29 reads wyhy instead of the curious whyh at the beginning of the verse; see Titkin, 47.
31. Notice the use of the term "city of David": it occurs in Samuel only here and in 2 Sam 5:7,9.
32. Cf. also 1 Kgs 1:40 (Solomon): "And all the people went up after him, playing on pipes [cf. 2 Sam 6:5] and rejoicing with great joy"; also 2 Kgs 11:14 (Joash): "and when she looked, there was the king standing beside the pillar ... and all the people of the land rejoicing and blowing trumpets."
33. Another possibility is to separate 3:12-6 from its present context, as Flanagan suggests (1971:46), and link it with 3:17-9 and 5:1-3. But the "covenant" motif in vss. 12-3 seems to belong naturally to vs. 21 and, more important, the key word šlh links it with the whole of vss. 20 ff.
34. On 1 Sam 25, see also below, Chapt. IV, para. 6-6.21, 14.51-14.512. Cf. the lists of word-usage in Schulte, 90-4; see also e.g. Budde, 1902:XVI; Segal, 1964-5: 324-32.
35. Blenkinsopp (1964:424) is close to the mark when he talks of "the complicated, as yet unsolved and probably insoluble skein of problems involved in the literary composition of 1 and 2 Sm."
36. Notice too the quite different role of David in this warfare: his absence from the military activity of chapt. 2 conforms better to the pattern of chaps. 11, 15 and 18.
37. I use the term "style" with some hesitation as it is clear that a definition of style and the nature and value of stylistic analysis of literature are matters of some considerable debate. See e.g. Spencer; Babb; Chatman. In what follows I am mainly interested (so also Rost) in what might be termed "rhetorical devices" (but also in lexical stock and irony); see further Muilenburg; Alonso-Schökel, esp. 143-7; Blenkinsopp, 1966:48-9; Ridout, Chapt. I.
38. See Driver, 1913b:242. If yhdw is indeed "hardly possible" after wypgšwm it is simpler to read wayyip^eg^ešû than to delete yhdw.
39. yhdw is no insignificant word - it encapsulates the peculiarity of the anecdote. Notice also the way in which the narrator uses simple repetitions to convey the "double" nature of the action: wyš³, ys³w; šlh ʿl hbrkh mzh, wšlh ʿl hbrkh mzh; wy³mr šbnr šl yw³b yqwmw, wy³mr yw³b yqwmw.
40. The examples set out in Appendix B, below, may be compared with those presented by Ridout, 36-47. He discusses 2 Sam 14:25-7, 20:1-22, 20:16-20, 12:13b-14, 1Kgs 2:26, 2 Sam 16:7b-8, 19:12-3, 1 Kgs 1:24-7, 2 Sam 13:32-3, 1 Kgs 2:42-3, 2 Sam 17:8-10, in that order. Rost merely lists his examples (221): 2 Sam 11:20-1, 11:25b, 13:32-3, 15:19-20, 16:7-8, 10-11. 18:19-31, 19:12-3, 1 Kgs 1:24-7, 2:42-3.
41. I am not arguing here that these techniques which have been singled out by others as characteristic of the "Succession Narrative" are necessarily the exclusive preserve of this narrative but simply that chaps. 2-4 share these characteristics and cannot on that account be distinguished from chaps. 9-20 + 1 Kgs 1-2, as Rost's analysis implies.

42. See Ridout, (24-5) where he summarizes: "In the case of phrases and longer units, repetition is normally varied in successive occurrences through the use of synonyms, omissions, additions, or alterations of word order. The great variety which is introduced into repeated phrases, sentences and paragraphs is so pervasive as to force us to conclude that our author has consciously attempted to modify these iterations."
43. Cf. a similar structure in 2 Sam 18:20-23 (Ridout, 99). Notice also that it is after the third statement about Asahel not turning aside that the killing is recounted - cf. Ridout, 120: "There is considerable evidence that the third repetition of a series was a favoured climactic point for our author."
44. On the text of this example see Driver, 1913b:248. I follow LXX in omitting lpny after ky am.
45. Note that the chiasmus has a single element at the centre and that this is the focal point of the speech. Cf. Ridout, 48-9: "In practically all the examples of chiasm which we have identified in the Succession Narrative, the structure has a single element in the center which is not paired with another element Furthermore, it can be said that the center of the chiasm is normally the most important part of the structure"
46. He discusses 1 Kgs 2:12-46 (25, 34, 36), 2 Sam 14:13-20 (17b, 20b), 20:4-13 (7, 10b, 13b), 18:17, 19:9 and 15:13-16:14 (complex and discussed in some detail).
47. The text of 4:6 is difficult. For various attempts to resolve the problems (none wholly convincing) see Driver, 1913b:255; Hertzberg, 264-5; Mauchline, 213. Adoption of LXX (so e.g. Driver, RSV) would mean the elimination of our particular phrase.
48. On distinctive authorship in a narrative tradition that employs stock patterning such as this, see below, Chapt. IV, para 10.213.
49. Flanagan (1971), who follows some of the earlier "literary" critics in assuming a two source theory in 2:12-32, remarks (45-6) that "the episode described in vv. 17-23 is not mentioned when Joab and Abner meet in vv. 24-28, as would be expected if it were from the same tradition." But it is precisely because the author does not develop the vengeance theme at this point that allows him the subtle luxury of foreshadowing the death of Abner (in 2:22) while yet managing to retain in the account of his death an element of shock. Moreover the failure to mention the Asahel scene in 2:24-8 is entirely in keeping with Joab's character as presented in the "Succession Narrative" - above all he is a man of deeds not words (the significant exception is in 2 Sam 19:1-9), and it is clear in 2:24-8 that he realizes that Abner is safely out of his reach, short of a desperate battle.
50. Acceptance of the "succession" nature of the narrative, particularly as it has been formulated by Rost (by no means the first to trace such a theme: cf. e.g. Wellhausen, 1878:224-5; Driver, 1913a:182-3) is almost a matter of course amongst commentators: see, recently, Fohrer, 1970:222; Gray, 1970:15; Mauchline, 240; Ridout, 212-3. Cf. also Flanagan, 1971:97-8 and 1972:172-3: he however sees this theme as

superimposed by redaction (the addition of Solomonic sections), upon an earlier "literary unit, a Court History, that was intended to show how David maintained legitimate control over the kingdoms of Judah and Israel" (see above, n. 20). Blenkinsopp (1966:47) also has suggested a separation of "legitimation" and "succession" themes. M. Smith describes the work as "a moral tract," a "story of crime and punishment": the plot stems from David's sin in the Bathsheba episode, and "succession" is only a major element in the final episode (Solomon established on the throne) where it is subsumed under the theme of reward and punishment. Carlson's criticism of Rost (he does not accept the existence of "a special Thronfolgegeschichte in 2 Sam") is somewhat diffuse but the importance of the "succession" theme does not appear to come under particular attack (cf. esp. 131-9, and 167). Jackson is strongly critical of Rost's account of the purpose of the story (i.e. it is written to the greater glory of Solomon) and argues that though the narrative does indeed provide an answer to the question how it came about that Solomon gained the throne, this is of only peripheral interest - the story is much more concerned with the delineation of character and themes such as "life and death, love and hatred, honour and dishonour" (194-5; cf. 185-6). The most recent criticism of Rost's definition of the narrative as a "succession" story is that of Schulte (see esp. 138).

51. Moreover when Whybray (1968:21) writes of this episode (Sheba) as reminding us "of the latent possibility ... that David would not have any successor to sit on his throne" it seems to me that he could not claim to be isolating a primary feature of the material. Where Sheba poses a threat it is clearly to David's grip on his kingdom: "Now Sheba ... will do us more harm than Absalom; ... pursue him, lest he get himself fortified cities, and cause us trouble." Any suggestion that the threat should be seen in terms of the "succession" must therefore be decidedly secondary to this emphasis. Indeed, as far as I can see, it cannot be supported from the actual text of the episode; nor it is obvious that the context places the episode in this perspective.
52. Cf. Blenkinsopp, 1966:47-8; also Carlson's exposition of 2 Sam 10-20 (24) in terms of the theme of "David under the Curse" (140 ff.). Note also von Rad's comment (1966:196 n.40) minimizing the importance of source problems in this section of chapt. 12; with this I concur.
53. Jackson, 185 n. 15: "It can hardly be regarded as laudatory to proclaim publicly the circumstances surrounding Solomon's birth."
54. Cf. Whybray (1968:27) on the Absalom episode: "Ostensibly the central character in these chapters is Absalom; yet in a deeper sense the reader is made to feel that it is David whom the author seeks to portray...." So too Brueggemann (1974:176) on 2 Sam 15-19.
55. Hence of course the claims that the story is written in maiores gloriam Salomonis (Rost, 234; so Whybray, 1968:53; Fohrer, 1970:222; and many others).
56. He attempts to overcome this difficulty by appeal to (hypothetical) circumstances of composition. Rost fails to see the problem.
57. Cf. Whybray, 1968:22: "Bathsheba and her son retire into the background" - which might well be termed an understatement.

58. If we are to go by the lists of 2 Sam 3:2-5 and 5:13-6 he was at best ninth or tenth in line of succession. See also Jackson, 185.
59. Nevertheless I do not think that it stands or falls with this inclusion; although without chaps. 2-4 the interpretation would clearly require some restatement.

MISSING

PAGE

NOT

AVAILABLE

NOTES - CHAPTER III

1. David's request for Michal appears to provide the excuse for Abner's visit. That it was a significant move in establishing a claim to the throne, as seen by many commentators (e.g. Carlson, 51; Hertzberg, 259; Mauchline, 210; cf. the caution of McKane, 1963:195), is not evident in the story as it stands.
2. It is often asserted that Abner's dealings with Rizpah in some way constituted a legal claim to the throne (or could be so construed); see e.g. H. Smith, 275; Budde, 1902:209; Carlson, 51; Hertzberg, 257; Fohrer, 1959:5; Auzou, 233. Note however the caution expressed by Tsevat, 241; McKane, 1963:190; Mauchline, 208-9. In support of the claim reference is usually made to 2 Sam 16:21-2 (Absalom and David's concubines) and 1 Kgs 2:13-25 (Adonijah's fatal request for Abishag). But why should Abner go through such a rigmarole when he was already a close relative and power was his to seize at will? And why is there absolutely no hint of such an understanding in Ishbosheth's rebuke? Similarly such interpretation requires the implication that both Adonijah and Bathsheba (in 1 Kgs 2) are to be viewed as imbeciles. In the latter case Solomon's reply to Bathsheba may be quite simply understood in terms of "ask an inch, take a mile": any request for anything would have served to trigger Solomon's paranoia (see also below, note /17/). 2 Sam 16:21-2 pictures a quite different situation: Absalom has already rebelled and claimed the throne; the public possession of the harem is, as the text explains, a propaganda exercise designed to show that his rebellion was past the point of no return; he behaves now as though he were indeed the king.
3. My emphasis here has points of similarity with that of Brueggemann in discussion of some later scenes (the death of the child in 2 Sam 12; the flight from Jerusalem): "It is a mature faith which lets him function without needing to function where he cannot. Great freedom and responsibility are combined with an ability to leave other matters completely in the hands of Yahweh" (1972c:41-2; cf. 1972a:esp. 14-7). My main criticisms of Brueggemann's analysis of the "Succession Narrative" are first (see also above, Chapt. I, n.2) that by concentrating on a few episodes (e.g. in chpts. 11-2, 15-6) he exaggerates (as does von Rad, 1966) the importance of Yahweh in the story as a whole, and second and more important, that he fails to present a coherent account in which both positive and negative aspects of David are balanced (cf. the highly favourable characterization in, e.g., 1970:371-3, 1971:328-31, 1972a:8, 14-7, with the picture of David "the death-bringer" in 1972b:108-9). Nevertheless it should be clear to the reader that my own interpretation owes much to Brueggemann.
4. Cf. H. Smith's observation (311) about the numbers of sons and servants and the implied extent of the estate, and McKane's query (1963:224) about the state of the text ("The difficulty is that, if Mephibosheth is to enjoy David's hospitality, he does not appear to stand in need of the produce of his estate in the way presupposed by the preceding half of the verse [i.e. vs. 10]"). The text needs no emendation.
5. Certainly the clues are laid in such a way as to suggest that it is Ziba who is lying (Hertzberg, 345; Klopfenstein, 327-8; Ridout, 161-7). In my judgement the primary clues are (a) the insistence of Mephibosheth's lameness (9:3, 13; 19:27) in which respect he was at the mercy of Ziba;

and (b) the otherwise gratuitous note about his apparent state of mourning (19:24). Gressmann (180,183), however, sees it the other way round; and McKane (1963:273) comments that "there is no means of ascertaining whether the truth was with Ziba or Mephibosheth."

6. Deception and clandestine activity (and the related theme of conspiracy) i.e. the attempt to prevent someone from confronting the true state of affairs, play an important role in the narrative as a whole. Death by deception is the lot of Asahel, Abner and Amasa. The deaths of Abner and Amasa, moreover, as well as that of Ishbosheth, are covert affairs, at least (the story stresses) in relation to the key figure, David. Indeed, in the case of Abner and Ishbosheth, the fact that the deed was, from David's point of view, covert, and that it was seen publicly to be so, is equally as important in its consequences as the deed itself. Deceit marks both of David's attempts to pass on to Uriah the paternity of the illegitimate child and the manner of Uriah's death (also a clandestine act), no less than the manner of David's reaction to this news. The Ammonites are sure that David's embassy is an act of deception just as Joab apparently cannot believe that Abner could have come to David's camp with anything but ulterior motives. By deception and clandestine dealing Ammon creates the opportunity to rape Tamar, Absalom the opportunity to murder Ammon, and Joab the opportunity to secure Absalom's return to court. The woman of Tekoa deceives the king, just as Nathan had done in an earlier scene, while a little later Hushai makes possible the return of David by an elaborate deception. Nor is the account of the death of Absalom free from this persistent motif: the altercation between Joab and the man who brought him the news of Absalom's plight in the tree involves the question of whether or not the king can be deceived, while Ahimaaz, bringing the news to David, does in fact attempt just this (18:29, cf. vs. 20). Deception is the mainspring of the Mephibosheth and Ziba story as we have just noted. And, of course, the last main conspiracy of the story (1 Kgs 1) moves from the covert meeting of Nathan and Bathsheba to what seems to be one of the boldest acts of deception of them all (see further, below, para. 3.2-3.22).

What we are witnessing in all this material is a concentration of interest on the way men's lives and responsibilities are bound up in a world where what "seems to be" competes often on equal terms with "what is". A basic datum dogs the observer (and evaluator) of this world and its inhabitants: man has a remarkable capacity for distorting or curtailing the perspectives of others. Deception, therefore, is of hermeneutical significance in this story.

7. There is a problem about the originality of this passage: see e.g. Carlson (157-9; cf. Budde, 1902:254-5) who takes 12:7b-12 as a Deuteronomic addition. He observes (190), however, that even without these verses it is possible to interpret the misfortunes which come upon David in 2 Sam 13-1 Kgs 2 as "retribution 'in full measure' for David's crime in 2 Sam. 11 f." So also von Rad (1966:196 n.40: "the editorial addition would be wholly in keeping with the spirit of the original") and Whybray (1968:23-4).
8. Simon, 232: "Nathan's 'Thou art the man' and David's response: 'I have sinned against the Lord' derive their force from their quintessential brevity."

9. This perspective is explored by Delekat, esp. 33-6. It should not be merely assumed, as by von Rad (1966:198-203; widely followed), that the few expressions of Yahweh's attitude (displeasure, love, etc.) are to be identified with the author's own view. Moreover it is easy to exaggerate the significance of the few passages where the narrator speaks of Yahweh's action or attitude (von Rad singles out 2 Sam 11:27, 12:24, 17:14; cf. Schulz, 1923:196-7): to say that Solomon was beloved by Yahweh, or that Yahweh ordained that the counsel of Achitophel be defeated does little more than add a providential dimension (the working out of fate in some vague way through Yahweh); it hardly warrants the claim that Yahweh is a primary focus of interest or that the work is one of "theological genius" (von Rad, 1966:202-3).
10. Segal (1964-5:331) rightly notes the parallel between the last clause and 1 Sam 20:8b. There are other parallels in the same segment: father-son confrontation, threat to the throne, absence at a sacrifice used as an excuse.
11. I disagree with Whybray (1968:28) who takes the brevity in the narrative here to indicate how cold and formal the reception was. Cf. also above, n.8.
12. The phrase encapsulates the problem of Absalom's conspiracy against Ammon. That the author is interested in the variety of ways of viewing this action is most obviously demonstrated within the narrative by the arguments of the woman of Tekoa and the action of Joab. Commentators are too apt to make rather facile judgements about David's failure here (cf. e.g. Hertzberg, 335; von Rad, 1966:182; Ridout, 148).

For a grotesquely melodramatic account of Absalom here as a kind of "type" of the evil "seducer" ("Verführer") in the Bible (linked with the Satan of the Gospels) see Voeltzel, 33-4. He concludes: "Absalom wäre also ein Punkt auf dieser im Grund ungenauen, aber einzigartig bedrohlichen, realen, quälenden und schmerzlichen Grundlinie, die von der Schlange von Genesis 3,1 bis zum Satan des Evangeliums der als Engel des Lichts geschminkt ist, und zu der 'Alten Schange' der Apokalypse läuft."
13. Brueggemann (e.g. 1972c:41-2, 1974:177-81, 187) stresses David's trust in Yahweh; he is not however the only recipient of trust here.
14. Delekat is looking here for the "original" David behind the claimed tendenz of the writing (i.e. Joab's perspective?).
15. Contrast e.g. the scene of lament over Abner's death (3:31-9). Two other occasions where inner emotion is revealed directly are 13:37, 39 and 1 Kgs 1:50. Schulz (1923) who discusses this feature of narrative style in Samuel as a whole cites (199) 19:1 as a normal case of grief indicated by externals, presumably taking wayyiregaz in a purely literal sense (to quiver, shake). The metaphorical meaning is well attested (BDB, 919; Driver, 1913b:333) and in my view better fits the context here.
16. Note however that it is the end of the passage that is of significance for what follows in the story: for it is Joab's view which finally dominates. The king reviews the troops in celebration of the victory and thus succumbs to the norm. As Jackson comments (194), David is at the end reduced "to a shell of a man."

17. The following two passages (15:24-9; 16:5-13) are often cited in illustration of a "positive" side of David: cf. Napier, 139-40; McKane, 1963:253-4, 257-8; Auzou, 389; and esp. Brueggemann, 1969:495; 1972a:14-7; 1972c:41-2; 1974:175-92, esp. 177-81.
 18. Brueggemann's exegesis (1974) is similar but he goes far beyond the text in his reconstruction of what Shimei and Abishai "stand for" in the tenth century cultural/historical context in which he sets the composition of the story.
 19. Bewer (29) calls him a "child of luck". Whybray (1968:37) asks, was it "real greatness, or was it luck ... which preserved David's kingdom?" Cf. Pedersen's analysis (188-90) of David's character in terms of his "blessing."
 20. This is a point against those who see David in this episode as shrewdly calculating, an initiator and strategist: see esp. McKane (1963:253-4); cf. Mauchline (277) and Napier (140: "he is still able to exercise the astute powers of strategy always characteristic of him").
 21. Van Rad misses entirely this deteriorating movement and observes romantically (1966:187) that "the noble behaviour of the king, purified as he is by suffering, shines like a brilliant light on all around him." Similarly deficient is Brueggemann's attempt (1971:328-31) to analyse the restoration of David in terms of a symbolic restoration of šālôm (order and stability): "The king is the source of health, order and life for the community."
- Note also a function both here and earlier of the Mephibosheth sub-plot. David's gain of the throne of Israel brings in its wake the gift of Saul's land to Mephibosheth. On the journey from Jerusalem David makes a simple judgement against the Saulide. By it (a gift in fact to Ziba) David's loss of his kingdom finds its parallel in Mephibosheth's deprivation: "The king said to Ziba, 'Behold, all that belonged to Mephibosheth is now yours.'" On the return journey the corresponding judgement is now characteristically a compromise. And its terms ominously foreshadow what is soon to threaten David's fortune: "And the king said to Mephibosheth '... I have decided: you and Ziba shall divide the land.'"
22. I take "man of Belial" in 20:1 to mean a "reckless" person, one who disregards the proprieties or disturbs the status quo (cf. Hannah, 1 Sam 1:16; Nabal, 1 Sam 25:17). Notice that nowhere is it said that Sheba actually engaged in an armed rebellion, merely that he called for the men of Israel to disband and go home, though of course the implication is secession. Caird (1151) rightly notes that when we next see Sheba he is accompanied only by his own clan. For a negative view of David in this episode see also Schulte, 179.
 23. It is surprising how little is said of Amasa. In fact, we are merely told of his parentage (he was closely related to both Joab and David) and of his appointment, first over Absalom's army, and second over David's; then (nothing about his role in the disastrous battle in the forest of Ephraim) of his commission to muster the men of Judah (presumably for the pursuit of Sheba). It is not until this point in the narrative that we are expressly told of any action actually taken by Amasa (previously he is simply the object of someone else's action or address). The story-teller wastes no words: "So Amasa went to summon Judah; but he delayed beyond the set time which had been appointed him" (20:5). He next appears at Gibeon. Again we see him, fleetingly, in action: "And Amasa came to meet him ... And Amasa did

not observe the sword which was in Joab's hand ... and he died" (20: 8-10). There is something almost cruelly comic about the portrait; Amasa was the man whose loss of a battle gained him a command, who failed to keep an appointment, and who could not spot the sword in his rival's hand.

24. Notice the balance between vss. 49 and 50 with the verbs of "rising" and "going" being repeated but the key element of "fearing" varied (hrd, yr). The focus of the narrative moves significantly from the more general (the guests of Adonijah trembled and went their way) to the particular (Adonijah feared Solomon and went to the altar).
25. Adonijah is introduced in ambiguous terms: "And Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself (mtns) saying, 'I shall be king' (>mlk). Then the parallel with Absalom (Carlson, 167; Whybray, 1968:30-1; Ridout, 151-2): we are told of his chariots, horsemen and runners (1:5, cf. 2 Sam 15:1); of how handsome he was (1:6, cf. 2 Sam 14:25; with Carlson, 184-8, I do not consider 14:25-7 to be an interpolation, as do e.g. Hertzberg, 334, and Mauchline, 268, (see esp. Caspari, 1909:318-22): the apparent contradiction between this passage and 18:18 is in my view (cf. Carlson, 187) better resolved by treating the latter as ^asecondary, aetiological, insertion); and of the fact that he was born next to Absalom (now mentioned explicitly), so that we know that, like Absalom, he is heir apparent (Noth, 1968:4-5; assuming that the principle of the rights of primo-geniture is understood - an assumption that lies behind most arguments for a "succession" theme in the story (cf. e.g. von Rad, 1966:181) and is strongly implied in 1 Kgs 2:15, 22, concerning Adonijah). Further our attention is drawn to the existence of definite political factions, following which the parallel with Absalom is broadened to include not only his action at the time of his rebellion but also of his conspiracy against Amnon: he holds a feast (sacrifice) to which "all his brothers, the king's sons" except "Solomon, his brother" are invited (1:9-10; cf. 2 Sam 15:7-12 and 13:23-7). Just as Amnon in 13:23-7 is singled out for special mention, so now Solomon in 1 Kgs 1:9-10. While, therefore, nothing explicit gives us grounds for seeing the feast in terms of conspiracy, by the end of the passage this possibility dominates our perspective. It is thus only too easy for us to accept Nathan's version of the event, as do Bathsheba and David in the narrative itself (so also many commentators when judging Adonijah's intentions: cf. e.g. Rost, 195-7; Whybray, 1968:23, 52; Montgomery and Gehman, 70, 73; Ridout, 151-2); only with our growing suspicion about Nathan's own actions is there an incentive to look again with other eyes at what has been recounted.

This carefully constructed parallel between the two sons and its subtle dramatic contribution is a strong argument against Flanagan's dissociation of 1 Kgs 1-2 from 2 Sam 13-20. His attempt (1972:174-5) to play down the extent of the parallel by claiming that any comparison must be between Absalom and Sheba, not Absalom and Adonijah, depends upon an historical, not a literary, analysis.

26. Two other points: (1) Adonijah later says to Bathsheba, and is not contradicted (indeed Bathsheba's willingness to act for him suggests perhaps a certain attitude of remorse): "You know that the kingdom was mine, and that all Israel fully expected me to reign" (2:15); (2) Šanda (cited by Montgomery and Gehman, 75) may well be right in suggesting that Solomon's reluctance to allow Adonijah the gift of Abishag may be connected, in part at least, with the fact that

Abishag is the only witness to the conspiracy. Why else is Abishag mentioned in this crucial scene (1:15)? Montgomery and Gehman offer the unlikely suggestion that the mention is designed to reinforce the point that Abishag was not a proper concubine (i.e. the king had not had sexual intercourse with her) since if she had this status, they claim, no visitors would have been allowed in the chamber.

27. The parallel with Absalom is also drawn at the personal as well as the political level. Just as Absalom killed his brother Amnon, so Solomon has Adonijah murdered. In terms of the theme of giving and grasping there is a further touch of irony in the fact that the occasion (pretext) for the murder is a gift - the gift of Abishag.
28. Whybray (1968:50-2) depends heavily upon the identification (unjustified, as I try to show) of Benaiah's expressed viewpoint (1:36,47) with that of the author, in order to show that the narrative was written in support of Solomon's accession.
29. Kittel (175) comments aptly: David is "an old man, hardly any longer capable of making up his own mind, quite in the hands of his court and harem - a society not over nice as to its aims and means."
30. The accounts of the fates of Adonijah, Abiathar, Joab and Shimei are much more than mere "appendices" allowing the "pulling together of all the strings" (Whybray, 1968:39) following the conclusion of the real ("Succession") theme: on my interpretation they play a key role in portraying the kind of ethos that finally prevails over David.
31. Solomon's speech concerning Joab (2:31-3) constantly reminds us of David: cf. "my father's house," "without the knowledge of my father David," "to David and to his descendents and to his house and to his throne."
32. Blenkinsopp (1966:49 n.5) notes this as a possible definition of the term "theme". In this sense it is closely related to "narrative structure" (cf. Wellek and Warren, chapt. 16, on "plot").

NOTES - CHAPTER IV

1. 1 Sam 21 and 2 Sam 1 may well be from different sources. A recent discussion is that of Grønbaek, 216-21, with relevant bibliography. As clear a presentation as any of the case against a solution whereby the Amalekite's story is taken as a falsehood is that of Kennedy, 1904 : 191-2.
2. Plöger's discussion (16-9) of the Kampfbericht follows somewhat similar lines, though it is more dependent upon material in Deuteronomy and Joshua.
3. The limitation to Judges and Samuel is basically related to the time available and the need to keep this section of the thesis in proper proportion to the rest. There is in this material (Jud and Sam) much narrative of the type that has often been characterized as "traditional" and it provides an opportunity to test the claim that the "Succession Narrative" is something quite distinct in kind from the earlier material of Samuel as well as that of Judges (the classic argument is perhaps that of von Rad, 1966).
4. This analysis may be equated with Richter's scheme as follows:
1 = Richter's 2; 2(a) = 3; 2(b) = 4; 2(c) = 4 also?
5. In the analysis of this and other patterns I have found it convenient to use the terms "element", "structure", and "language". The elements are the narrative or descriptive segments which together constitute the pattern (as itemized e.g. in the passages presently under discussion). The structure is the particular arrangement or order of the elements, and more especially the most important of these. The language is the actual verbal expression, the wording, of the elements.
6. It is possible, though this cannot be demonstrated here, that it may be redactional, deriving from the transformation of a story about the death of Eli and his sons into one primarily concerned with the capture of the ark, the object being to build a bridge between the material of chapters 1-3 and that of 5ff. Most commentators see the process as rather the reverse.
7. Perhaps, following Richter, this element of initial movement should be included as standard.
8. For element 1, see the analysis of 1 Sam 4:10, 2 Sam 2:17 and 2 Sam 18:6 above. In the case of 2 Sam 18:6, I would count wys' ... lqr't (= Richter's 1) as much a part of element 1 as wthy hmlhnh (= Richter's 2). 1 Sam 31 has wplštym nlhmym bysr'l; cf. 1 Sam 4:10: wylhww plštym. The note about the ark is omitted from 1 Sam 4:10.
9. The variation here (cf. 1 Sam 4:17, 31:1, 2 Sam 2:17, 18:7) may be governed by a desire to avoid the rather crude repetition of "Philistines" that we find e.g. in 1 Sam 31:1-2.

10. Both 2 Sam 2 and 18 lack an equivalent summary statement of element 2(c). The latter proceeds directly to its elaborated account of Absalom's death. The language of the former momentarily raises the possibility that the three sons of Zeruiah are going to be thus singled out ("and there were there the three sons of Zeruiah ..."), and although this turns out to be, in fact, the introduction to a scene of pursuit, in the end the death does occur, and indeed it is Asahel, one of the three sons, who dies. Note that he is on the winning side, unlike the others whose deaths are related in these passages, though whether it is to be his or the defeated Abner's death that is recounted hangs for a time in the balance. There may be a deliberate artistic counterpointing here.
11. Similarities between these two passages are noted in passing by Klostermann 129; Nowack 35, 36 and 194; Schulz, 1923:30-1; Caspari, 1926:394. A little fuller are the observations of Lühr 121: he notes not only the description of the messenger but also the question, and, to a limited extent, the form of the message (ns ... wgm ... wgm) So also Kennedy, 1904:192.
12. The expression "earth on the head" occurs again only in 2 Sam 15:32 (the "Succession Narrative") and in Neh 9:1 (where it is associated with fasting and sackcloth; more a sign of contrition). Elsewhere it is ashes (see however Jastrow) or dust that is put or thrown upon the head to signify humiliation, contrition or mourning. Cf. the recent discussion by de Ward, esp. 6-8. On the tearing of clothes, see ibid., 8-10; note again the connection with 2 Sam 15:32, both the phrase as a whole and the use of qr^c in the Qal part. pass.:

1 Sam 4:12	<u>wmdyw</u> <u>qr^cym</u>	}	<u>w^cdmh</u> <u>c^cl</u> <u>r^cšw</u>
2 Sam 1:2	<u>wbgdyw</u> <u>qr^cym</u>		
2 Sam 15:32	<u>qrw^c</u> <u>ktntw</u>		

 Cf. qr^cy bgdym in 2 Kgs 18:37 // Isa 36:22, and Jer 41:5.
13. Reading mnhh with LXX; MT has m^crk^h, perhaps a dittography from the next clause. Cf. Driver, 1913b:48. This also noticeably improves the balance of the prose.
14. Cf. Klostermann, 129: "Frage u. Antwort genau wie 1S4,16.17".
15. As seems to be implied, in the case of the messenger scene, e.g. by Lühr, 121.
16. E.g., the drawing up of the opposing ranks, details of weapons, of who attacked first, or how long before one side fled. Hence also van Seter's point (188) about the lack of any "contest" in OT battle reports, in contrast with what he calls "heroic" style; on the other hand we do find quite elaborate accounts of the aftermath of the battle, as in 2 Sam 2 and 18.
17. 1 Sam 31 plunges straight into the account of the battle, while 1 Sam 4 has a preliminary skirmish and a scene in the Philistine camp, and 2 Sam 18 the episode concerning who is to lead the army in the field together with a description of the army marching out under review. 2 Sam 18 and 1 Sam 31 elaborate the aftermath of the scene of the battle, particularly in connection with the death of the leading character concerned (the former in considerable detail); but no details are given of the deaths of Hophni and Phineas.

18. A kind of "dischronologization" (Nachholung) results. Though this is by no means without precedent in OT narrative (cf. e.g. Schulz, 1923:10-1; Baumgartner, 150-5, 157; Martin) it is rarely successful just because chronological sequence is by far and away the normal mode of narration and one which, therefore, the reader or listener comes to expect. 2 Sam 18 avoids the clumsiness by proceeding directly with the detailed account of the death. Clearly the structure in its most basic form, i.e. with a summary account of element 2(c), is most suitable in a passage such as 1 Sam 4:10 where there is no further elaboration.
19. It is interesting to note that the use of standard patterns in oral traditional composition can lead to similar, and sometimes grosser, infelicities: cf. Lord, 1938:439-45, and Gunn, 1970:192-203, where there is further bibliography.
20. An interesting example of the former being postulated is van den Born's examination (209-14) of Jud 19: he argues in view of the many similarities between this story and the Sodom story in Gen 19 that it is a "pastiche" of Gen 19. (Similarly Jud 20 is "une création artificielle" based on Jos 7-8). The latter type of explanation seems to be that most often appealed to by commentators in connection with the passages presently under discussion, in the relatively few cases where not only are similarities actually noticed but some explanation is offered. (See the notes at the beginning of each pattern discussed, above and below).
21. 2(a) - wyngp(w) ... lpny 'bdy dwd: where the close parallel lies in the construction and language of the element as well as in the distinctive subject matter, viz. "the servants of David".
2(b) - bywm hhw
22. Against van Seters, Porter's discussion (20) is pertinent; see especially n.16, where he comments regarding those Hittite royal inscriptions which have been regarded as most resembling Hebrew "historical composition": "their narrative-form and style ... are quite different from the vivid use of dialogue and the dramatic scene construction, which mark the Hebrew prose stories" (cf. also Schulte, 6).
23. The importance of reading OT stories as stories and not just as the sum of their theological or cultic import or overlay has been stressed by Dorothy Thompson in her paper, "Folktale Method and Old Testament Narrative", delivered at the 7th Congress of the IOSOT, Uppsala, 12th August, 1971. She also drew attention to certain narrative "patterns" or story forms in Genesis and some ancient near eastern narrative literature, though these differed a little from those under consideration here in that they were perhaps rather more abstract and appeared themselves to constitute independent episodes or whole stories even - a characteristic of the present "patterns" is that they function largely as dependent or subsidiary story elements, segments which it is in most cases difficult to imagine as existing without a matrix.

In connection with the definition of the type of pattern presently under discussion, note, too, the lack of any obvious theological pressures informing the basic shape. It is to be distinguished, therefore, from the kind of stereotype exemplified by the summary accounts in Judges of Israel's repeated apostasy, cry to the Lord, promise of help, and deliverance (see e.g. Beyerlin), which reflects

rather the interest of the liturgist or literary editor with didactic/theological aims. Similarly one would also want to have some reservations about the comparability of some of the summary accounts of battles in Joshua, particularly, where a Deuteronomistic theology pervades the context and where a strictly dogmatic interest in the theme of the Holy War may well be responsible for some, at least, of the stereotyping.

24. Apart from the fact that 2 Sam 1:9 and 1 Sam 31:4 apparently relate to the same event (and therefore, as already noted, create a problem through their difference), the only similarity commonly observed by the commentators is that between Jud 9:54 and 1 Sam 31:4, usually by a passing reference, without further comment, either to the comparable phrase (e.g. Burney, 288, on "Draw thy sword, etc.", or Moore, 268 on "his squire ran him through"), or to the passage in general: so Oettli, 262; Budde, 1897:177; Lühr, 119; Caspari, 1926:388. Klostermann (130) notes a connection between 2 Sam 1:15 and 1 Sam 22:18.
25. Most of these are, in one sense or another, necārîm: Jud 8:20, Jud 9:54, 2 Sam 1:9 (cf. vss. 5,6), 2 Sam 1:15.
26. Though the verb in the initial position in Jud 8 is qwm, the phrase šlp hrb (1 Sam 31, Jud 4) is used in the next segment which relates the failure to carry out the instructions. wdqrny (1 Sam 31) - the verb is used again in these passages only in 1 Sam 31 and in the final segment of Jud 9: note again the agreement between these two passages. pgc (2 Sam 1:15) - for the sense of "fall upon" implying killing, cf. especially Jud 15:12-3; "Swear to me that you will not fall upon me (pgc) yourselves. They said to him, No, we will only bind you and give you into their hands; we will not kill you (mwt)"; cf. also Jud 18:25, 1 Kgs 2:25 ff, and two of the other passages under examination here, Jud 8:21, 1 Sam 22:17-8.
27. Jud 8:19: "As the Lord lives, if you had saved my brothers alive I would not slay you." 2 Sam 1:14: "How is it you were not afraid to put forth your hand to destroy the Lord's anointed?" That otherwise an explanatory clause would have been felt to be appropriate here is perhaps indicated by the fact that Jud 8 proceeds to add one to the second (and parallel) set of instructions (see further below, para.5.12).
28. wdqrny is lacking in the parallel passage, 1 Chron 10:4, a rdg. favoured by Budde, 1902:191, with the comment: "Nicht den Tod sondern schimpflichen Mutwillen scheut Saul". So too Driver 1913b:228. This may be a case however of the Chronicler smoothing the text. On Saul's reason as a whole, cf. Jer 38:19.
29. 2 Sam 1:9 adds an explanatory clause. The Amalekite in justifying to David his action reiterates, though in different words, Saul's own reason. There is thus a nice balance in the prose here.
30. Cf. esp. the language used earlier in the segment in 1 Sam 31 and Jud 9; see above, para. 5.1.
31. As in previous cases the only expansion to the simple form of the speeches is the addition of an explanatory clause in Jud 8.
32. Cf. Hertzberg (344) on Ziba's gift: "The description of his gifts reminds us of those which Abigail brings to David in 1.25.18."; or Budde (1902:275) on 2 Sam 16:1: "Auch die Massen stimmen mit jener

Stelle [i.e. 1 Sam 25:18], nur dass Abigail von dem Feste das Doppelte an Wein mitnimmt." A passing reference to Abigail's gift is also made by Mauchline (275) and, amongst the older commentators, Klostermann (204), Kennedy (1904:269) and Caspari (1926) on 2 Sam 16:1. Note also Schulz, 1923:24.

33. LXX has phoinikes, "dates", for qys here but not elsewhere.

34. Methodologically, there is nothing improper in setting to one side the two non-equivalent items in order to emphasize the correspondence between the other four items, though if the ratio of non-equivalent to equivalent were the other way round one would have reason to suspect the procedure.

35. This is a difficult question which need not be settled here. Apart from bread and wine the items in question occur in the OT as follows; smqym - 1 Sam 30:12, 1 Chron 12:41; qys/dblh - Amos 8:1-2, Jer 40:10, 12, 48:32, Mic 7:1, Isa 16:9, and 1 Sam 30:12, 1 Chron 12:41, respectively. The term used to describe the quantity of wine, nbl-yyn occurs in only three other contexts - 1 Sam 1:24, 10:3, Jer 13:12.

36. Thus when we turn to a comparable list of food, 1 Chron 12:41 - comparable in terms of general context and content (the bringing of provisions, which are listed, for the maintenance of some soldiers in connection with David) - we find that though we again come across the smqym and dblym there are no quantities given, let alone similar ones. Nor is there any correspondence with the order of the items in 1 Sam 25 and 2 Sam 16 (cf. also Gen 43:11, 32:13-15 or the presents in Gen 45:21-23, 2 Kgs 8:9).

37. Similarities between the two passages have been noted by a number of commentators and usually taken as indication of a single author or redactor. Perhaps the most thorough observation is that of Cook, (168): "The resemblance which vs. 10b bears to 2:24a leads to the discovery of several points of contact between the story of Amasa and Sheba in chap. 20 and that of Abner and Ishbaal in chap. 2. Both Abner and Sheba are followed by Benjamin (2:25; 20:14). The murders of Asahel and Amasa are narrated in very similar terms (2:23 sq.; 20:10a, 12, 13a). Gibeon recurs in each (2:12 sq.; 20:8); and end of the war is similarly described (2:28; 20:22b). Hence it is possible that the same redactor has worked at chaps. 2 sq. and 20". Klostermann 136, takes 2:23b as a gloss from 20:10-4; followed by Budde, 1902:206, and H. Smith, 272; contra, Lühr, 129. Note esp. Luther (195) who observes the similarity of the passages, in particular 2:33b and 20:12, and suggests that they (together with 2:14-6) are variations of one tradition, but without elaborating his meaning.

38. For the problems in the text see Driver, 1913b:343-4; cf. most recently, Mauchline, 296-7: he maintains that to grasp a man's beard was an offensive act - here, however, the text plainly implies that it was a normal part of an act of embracing.

39. On the deception see e.g. McKane 1963:279; on the parallel with Ehud, Hertzberg, 372. Indeed the connection with Jud 3 has been noted in some attempted reconstructions (e.g. Budde, 1902:300; Driver summarizes 1913b:243). It may also be possible that the difficulties in this section are more than textual (though they are undoubtedly that as well) - that the narrator has attempted to adopt here a motif of assassination by deception which has appealed to him but failed to cope adequately with the fact that it basically belongs to a left-

handed hero such as Ehud. The result may have been a confusion or vagueness in the original text leading easily to textual corruption.

40. 3) In OT accounts of killing such details are not commonly given; cf. however Jud 3:21-2 (Ehud and Eglon: (a), (b), (c)), 1 Sam 25:8 (Abishai to David, of the sleeping Saul: (a), (b)), and 2 Sam 3:27 (Joab and Abner: (a), (b), (e); note in (b) the term hms again - it occurs nowhere else with this meaning (see Driver, 1913b:255, for 2 Sam 4:6)). See further, Schulz, 1923:11-12, 14.

The rdg. b^aah^arê hah^anît in 2 Sam 2:23 has been disputed (see further Driver, 1913b:243). Whether MT is retained meaning "with the butt of the spear", or Klostermann's conjecture h^ahōrannît, "backwards", is accepted, there is clearly some element of surprise or deception involved since a blow with the butt or a blow backwards (meaning that the spear was used butt first?) would be little expected (note, incidentally, the fine play on words). Thus there is probably a parallel here with the motif of death by deception found in 2 Sam 20 and Jud 3.

41. Cf. 1 Sam 26:8 (Abishai - also one of the sons of Zeruah).

42. The point in 2:23b is not that the people "stood still" (so RSV for wy^amdw; cf. Hertzberg, 372) but that the "stopped" (with overtones, possibly, of "took up a stand" - see the use of cmd in vs. 25 and cf. 2 Sam 20:11). In chapt. 20 the same thing happens: the body acts as a magnet for those (probably, as McKane (1965:279) points out, the militia) who are arriving along the highway presumably to meet Amasa at the great stone at Gibeon; they are then in a position to set off in the pursuit together. The point in chapt. 20 about carrying the body into a field and throwing a garment over him is not, in my view, a matter of removing an impediment to the pursuit (so most commentators: cf. e.g. McKane 1963:279-30; Hertzberg, 373) but of giving the body a token burial.

43. On (a) see the previous note. In the case of (b) unless we are to interpret the text as an example of inclusio (ring composition), it would appear that Joab and Abishai are to be pictured as setting off (by themselves?) immediately after the death of Amasa, to be followed later by the others who have gathered in the meantime; whereas in 2 Sam it is simply related that the two heroes and, it is to be inferred, their men all set off after they have stopped and organized themselves. If the first mention of the pursuit, however, is simply the first ring of an inclusio then the narrative of the rallying becomes subordinate to that of the departure and virtually equivalent to a temporal clause - "When they had rallied they set off in pursuit".

44. Similarities between 2 Sam 2:28 and 18:16 are noted by Eissfeldt, 88 1931:26, n.1.

45. Contrast the much longer ending of 2 Sam 2:28ff; note also that the phrase occurs after the cessation of hostilities in 2 Sam 18, but only after the account of Absalom's burial (cf. the burial of Asahel in 2:28ff.) and used of the defeated army, in which case it punctuates, but not finally, the scene as a whole.

46. See also the comments on some of this material by Henn, 200-202, 220-222; e.g. following a brief survey of the Abimelech story: "In these miniature actions of war and intrigue, jealousy and revenge, we have a kind of epitome of all warfare, of the whole human situation" (222).

47. E.g., in the second set of instructions in 1 Sam 22 and Jud 8, why does the one use sbb and the other qwm if the structure in which these words are embedded was the result of deliberate borrowing or assimilation of the one to the other? It is hard, on such an hypothesis, to see any motivation for the difference.
48. As noted earlier, Budde (1902:206) claims that 2 Sam 2:23b is a gloss from 20:10-14. Yet 2:23b sits where it is in the narrative more securely than the corresponding clause (the parallel is not exact) in chapt. 20 as witness the attempts to transpose it (e.g. RSV; cf. further Driver, 1913b:344, on 20:12). The claim appears to be quite arbitrary, particularly so when a host of other similarities are allowed to persist without comment.
49. So particularly the Judges material: see e.g. Widengren, 1948:65-8; Kraft, 1019; or Gray 1967:205-207, 222-30, where he frequently uses the term "saga". It is less obviously the case with opinion regarding the relevant sections of 1 Samuel and the first few chapters of 2 Samuel, though a fondness for the portmanteau term "tradition" tends to make an assessment of the point difficult (e.g. McKane's survey, 1963:22-8). It does seem, however, that often it is oral tradition that is envisaged (e.g. Hertzberg, 47, 62-3, 240-44). Generally the closer one moves to the narratives about David's reign the less the term "tradition", let alone "oral tradition", is used, as e.g. in Hertzberg's notes on the formation and structure of 1 Sam 7-15, 16-2 Sam 1, and 2-7, respectively. Cf. Widengren's rather arbitrary distinction (1948:65-8) between Joshua and Judges, "based on oral tradition in the form of sagas", and Samuel, founded in part at least on "oral traditions which, however, have presumably been put to paper not long after the events described"; similarly Gressmann, XIII-XVI. "Tradition" of course is a term that has rarely been used of the "Succession Narrative"; cf. however Mowinckel, 13-4; Macdonald, 40-3; Porter, 22; Jackson, 183, 195. For a brief but useful summary of the problem of oral tradition in the OT in general see Fohrer, 1970:36-41.
- Clearly this particular turn of the argument will not impress those who are convinced that from earliest times contemporary written records were kept by Israelites and that it is from them that most of our present text derives (cf. e.g. Kitchen, 135-8).
50. Their comments earlier on the page, however, about the difficulties in postulating a "transitional text", overstate the case, perhaps because they are thinking primarily of "oral formulaic poetry" rather than traditional prose. Much of chapt. 2, "The Oral Heritage of the Written Narrative", as well as the bibliographical essay, pp. 303-11, is of interest in connection with the subject of the present paper.
51. On this and the following points see Lord, 1960:chapters 2 and 4 (for this particular point see especially pp. 17, 78-81). This reference anticipates the next section and the force of it will become more obvious in the light of the discussion that follows below, para. 10.21-10.22.
52. On the relationship of traditional narrative to history see further Scholes and Kellogg, 30, 40 f., 49; Culley, 1972; Widengren, 1959: 234-7.

53. See also 405, 407-8, and, on the poetical byliny, 305 where he instances the selection by a knight of horse and equipment, his arrival at court, or his encounter with an adversary in the field. Cf. Chadwick, II/246-7; also Lord, 1960:notes 1 and 2 to his chapter on "The Theme" (chapt.4); Dégh xxxii ("stereotyped formulas"); Radlov, V/xvi ff. ("elements of production"), quoted extensively by the Chadwicks, III/183-3. Clearly Irish prose "runs" are a closely related phenomenon: cf. e.g. Delargy, 208-9; and esp. Bruford (182-209; also 36-40) - an excellent descriptive account though some of his theoretical observations (e.g. on the derivation of oral runs and, indeed, the basic premise of the book) are at best unsubstantiated.

54. It is difficult to find studies in other areas that have been made with comparable control and thoroughness. For an introduction to the general background to this work, with an OT audience in mind, see Culley, 1963:114-25; 1967:3-27.

55. The references are to Arend, and Gesemann, 65-96. See also Lord, 1960:chapt.4. A small sample of Yugoslav and Homeric "themes" may be found set out fully in Gunn, 1971:1-31.

The term "theme" can be misleading here; there is need for distinction between what might be called its technical and its more general, literary usages. As a technical term applied to oral narrative it should be used as an indication of the presence of a patterned sequence of events or descriptive elements. See similarly, Scholes and Kellogg (26) who suggest as an alternative the term topos; cf. also Culley, 1967:19-20.

56. Private communication - this work, as yet unpublished, is part of a London University doctoral research programme on thematic structure in Homer.

57. More generally (i.e. not just in relation to "thematic" composition) this kind of individual contribution to the tradition has often been observed and in a wide range of contexts: as Campbell (I/1) puts it, "there are varieties in public speakers amongst the people as amongst their representatives, for some are eloquent, some terse, some prosy"

58. See Culley, 1967:9,16. Cf. e.g. Dégh's comment on Hungarian oral narrative (xxxii): "A strong individual stamp may and usually does emerge in the story, but the strict adherence to the general framework of the tale and the use of stereotyped formulas is a positive must for the storyteller."

59. Perhaps, for one thing, because the need for the stereotype as a technical device diminishes. It is also common for the concept of authorship and of individuality in relation to the tradition to change. (Scholes and Kellogg are interested in this subject: see 31,53-6 and cf. chapt.6, "Point of View in Narrative".) Thus one finds, in the case of the Homeric epic, that the kind of patterned segment or "theme" which we have been discussing is virtually non-existent in Apollonius Rhodius (Argonautica) or Quintus Smyrnaeus (Posthomerica) even though these writers were consciously imitating Homer.

60. Notice the hint of formulaic language here: "Now therefore let me pin him to the earth with one stroke of the spear and I shall not strike him twice" (26:8; cf. Joab's killing of Abner in 2 Sam 20:10).

61. Napier (143-4) describes it as "an antithetical relationship" and "a relationship involving tension". Schulte (150-4) characterizes these passages (16:10, 19:23 and also 3:29) as later redactional insertions designed to vindicate David over against the sons of Zeruah, particularly Joab (the original hero of the story); but he is hard pressed to find warrant for the excision in the texts themselves - his strongest point is the repetitious nature of 2 Sam 3:28-39. For analyses showing how 16:10 is an integral part of the larger context see Ridout, 56-70 and Brueggemann, 1974:177-81.
62. There are textual problems in this passage, especially at the end of vs. 15 and beginning of vs. 16. See Driver, 1913b:353; H. Smith, 377-8; Mauchline, 304. With most commentators (against Driver) I accept the end of vs. 15 as it stands in MT (wy'p dwd), and see it as providing the particular motivation for the attempt to kill David (so also e.g. Hertzberg, 386).
63. Note that the motif of David and Joab at cross-purposes is characteristic of many of the stories of Joab: in addition to those already mentioned are (a) the end of the story of the Ammonite war (cf. esp. 12:26), (b) the story in 2 Sam 14 of Joab's ploy to bring Absalom back from exile, (c) the story in 2 Sam 24 (cf. esp. vss. 3-4) of the census, and above all, (d) the death of Joab (1 Kgs 2) as a legacy of David.
64. On the use of personal names to literary effect see Clines' recent study. It is a curious fact that the "sons of Zeruah" are never known by a patronymic, and, to my knowledge, such use of a matronymic is unique in the OT. Whatever the reason for this it is clear that the usage suits the narrative tradition perfectly. Possibly the usage arose originally in a "narrative" context for these literary reasons.
65. However, like Hoftijzer (420 n.3), I do not find these other parallels altogether clear and convincing, certainly not in the case of the Jeremiah passage which lacks entirely any aspect of "disguise" in the presentation of the parable.
66. Cf. 221: "The legal issue ... is the hallmark of this literary genre" and 226: "Nathan's story should be examined for traces of a real legal problem justifying its being brought by a third party (the prophet) to the notice of the king."
67. It is a similar focus that leads Hoftijzer to argue (421 and cf. 421-3, esp. 423 n.1), against Simon as it happens, that "this procedure only makes sense, if one presupposes that the decision of the king in a special juridical case was also binding for parallel cases. This means that in fact the king himself was bound by such a precedent." This seems to me to be a quite unnecessary inference, especially once one has put the legal aspect in its proper perspective (see further below, para. 4.11, 4.12).
68. Hoftijzer (442-4) rightly notes the "vulnerable position" of the woman and the difference between her situation and that of the prophets.

69. Simon, 221: it is "a disguised parable designed to overcome man's own closeness to himself, enabling him to judge himself by the same yardstick that he applies to others."
70. It must be close to the "real" situation, yet not so close as to be obvious to the person to whom it applies. See also Simon, 221.
71. They do not in themselves serve primarily to teach some general doctrine or belief. Cf. Rofé, 154: "... in the specific case of prophetic parables ... the ideas represented are doctrines or beliefs relevant to the prophetic activity."
72. Cf. Budde, 1902:265 (quoting Nöldeke - but from which work is not clear) for a similar story from an Arab source. Gunkel (1921:132-3) recognised the folktale (märchen) character of the motif and suggested in addition (35-6) that the story of the poor man's ewe was itself a folktale, on the grounds that it has a certain poetic quality and that it is not apt in its present context.
73. Most of his discussion, however, is concerned specifically with the wiles (not all of which lead to death, according to his examples) of the foreign woman. He also draws attention to the theme in Proverbs 1-9 of the "foreign/strange woman" whose way leads to death. See also McKane, 1970:334-41, 360-9.
74. Abishag also presides over David's death. Blenkinsopp does not include the Rizpah incident (he is looking only at 2 Sam 9ff.), but cites Absalom's rebellion and occupation of his father's harem as an instance of the "pattern"; this, however, seems to me to lack the catalyst quality of the other incidents. Moreover, I cannot accept that Blenkinsopp's definition of the pattern (in terms of "sin externalised in a sexual form which leads to death"; death in each case is "punishment") adequately corresponds to the presentation of the material in the narrative as it stands; particularly in Adonijah's case there is no suggestion in the text of sexual sin, and it is a moot point (and indeed, as I have suggested earlier, deliberately so presented) whether we should infer rebellious intentions in him (Blenkinsopp, 1966:48). There are similar difficulties with Leach's interesting analysis of the story (74-9) in terms of these "sexual incidents" (he traces themes of sex relations and political relations developing in parallel).
75. The main similarities are noted briefly by Klaehn (39) who is interested, however, in a literary connection (the "Yahwist") between the two blocks of material. Auzou (392 n.37) observes that the one story recalls the other. On the Rahab story in oral tradition see Tucker, esp. 83-6.
76. For the two motifs see Thompson, K649 and K646, respectively; cf. also K515 (and 516-39) and K640-9. The two motifs are not in fact incompatible - the searchers could have asked the whereabouts of the spies, been told that they had gone, doubted this and searched the house, and, having found nothing, taken the false directions as the truth.
77. See also Ridout, 97: "This remarkable elaboration of what could have been told quite briefly serves the purpose of creating suspense for the listener and gives him ample time to ponder how David is likely to receive the report of the momentous events of that day." Cf. 102:

"We see that the entire episode is built on the ironic contrast of good tidings over against bad tidings. The [bšwrh] [the key word, bšr, appears 9 times] has been good news for David's forces, for they have been victorious in battle. But for David the [bšwrh] was bad, for his son died."

78. Though their situations are not directly comparable in that these men claim to be more than just messengers.
79. Note also Parry and Lord, I/419-20 ((7) and (16)), 325 (note the parallel in the news being distorted so as to gain a reward) and 209.
80. Auzou (393) describes Ahimaaz here as "infiniment délicat et sachant ménager le coeur du père." Klopfenstein (330,345) claims that this evasion is motivated by consideration for the king rather than by fear of being struck down, but he offers no justification for his opinion.

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NOTES - APPENDIX C

1. Again the Chadwicks serve as a valuable source of reference here; of particular interest in connection with OT "historical" narrative are the specific comparisons they make with certain forms of "saga", especially Icelandic: see Vol. III, Part IV, esp. 635-7, 642-3, 646-8 (for a useful survey of recent debate over the "oral" character of the extant sagas, see Scholes and Kellogg, 43-51, 307-11). Or cf. the Tatar "non-heroic" sagas which "relate for the most part to well-known historical characters - the heroes of history in fact. They are told in a simple and direct style - what we may call the chronicle style ..." (III, 114). From further afield cf. e.g. some of the prose traditions collected from Polynesia by Sir George Grey, or from Scotland, by Wallace and MacIsaac.
2. Even so, it is not simply a matter of the element of "contest" being absent from Hebrew literature of this kind. In the cases e.g. of David and Goliath, the capture of Jericho, and those battles where the Israelite force is split into separate parties (e.g. Ai, Gideon against the Midianites, Abimelech at Shechem, Joab against the Ammonites) the victory is not achieved as a stroke. There is tension and elaboration in these accounts.
3. Thus, e.g. in connection with the battle accounts, Schulz (1923:204) suggests, rather rashly in my view, that we have to do with a basic incapability on the part of the Hebrew narrator ("auf einem Mangel in Können des Erzählers") who was unable to deal with scenes involving large scale actions. He is followed by Alonso-Schökel, 162. On a more general level, Goitein seeks an explanation for the simplicity of Biblical stories in both social causes and religious factors, particularly that of monotheism (I am dependent for this information on the long review by Patterson).
4. It is well known that not only can the narrator of traditional tales often tailor-make his material to suit his audience or the circumstances of the narrative, but that the difficulties inherent in recording a tradition, as e.g. by dictation, can lead to fairly radical curtailment of the normal scope of the recitation. (On contraction along standard lines see e.g. Lord (1960:102-23) or, in respect of an Homeric "typical scene," Gunn (1971:22-30). A classic account of flexibility of performance in oral composition is given by Radlov (V/xii ff; quoted by the Chadwicks, III/184-5); cf. the interesting sketch of twentieth century Hungarian storytelling in the Introduction to Dégh's edition of Hungarian folktales; or Campbell (I/I and cf. xlix) on nineteenth century Scottish storytelling: "But though a tale may be spun out to any extent, the very same incidents can be, and often are, told in a few words ...". There is a useful summing up by the Chadwicks, III/854-75. On the exigencies of dictation and the effect on the material recorded, note the important observations of Radlov, cited and discussed by the Chadwicks (III/179-80) and again in connection with the recording of ancient Irish narrative traditions by Murphy (1966:98-9). Cf. the suggestion by Dillon (2), in accounting for the "extreme bareness of the narrative" of some of the oldest texts of ancient Irish "historical" tales, that they are little more than "summaries of the matter of the story." Lord discusses the oral dictated text: Parry and Lord, 1954:I/7-11; Lord, 1960:124-8; 1953:124-34.

5. Thus in the non-biblical material (see e.g. Pritchard, 275-301) one is struck not only by the obviously different linguistic conventions, such as the "terror-inspiring splendour of the king" and its consequences, but also by the much greater range of expressions for straightforward things like taking the booty.
6. This matter of definition is crucial; what I present above (Chapt. IV, para 2.-2.34) is a detailed analysis of certain OT "battle" passages which, it can be argued with some confidence, show every sign of oral traditional, as opposed to annalistic, character. Both Richter and Van Seters generalize much too freely.

In a comprehensive study of the "form" in the OT we should also need to consider the extent to which annalistic convention might itself have been derived from a convention in oral tradition, or the possibility of a coalescing of "forms" - the adaptation of an already familiar scribal convention by, say, a Deuteronomistic editor, in sympathy with the existing conventions of the traditional subject matter with which he was dealing.

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